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NUT hears classroom action calls

Teachers' leader fears militant election backlash

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

LEADERS of Britain's biggest teaching union were last night heading for a series of confrontations with militant delegates to their annual conference, who are seeking support for a new wave of industrial action in schools.

Six separate calls for action are contained in the conference agenda, which was drawn up before the Conservative election victory. The proposals range from a boycott of national curriculum tests and a refusal to co-operate with staff appraisals to possible strikes over redundancies, pay, class sizes and special educational needs.

The first clash took place yesterday as the union's executive met in Blackpool. Eight of the 40 members, questioning the value of a moderate approach, opposed a motion reasserting the union's campaign to win public support for state education.

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the NUT, saw the revolt as the start of a backlash against the election result among a minority of

teachers. "I think delegates who come here have every right to feel angry and to feel resentment and frustration. They have had another year of being asked to do more, being asked to achieve change without any proof that the change is for the better."

Mr McAvoy expressed confidence that the moderate line would prevail at this weekend's conference, but said that delegates would still vote for action on some issues. He urged parents not to assume that schools would be disrupted, since teachers were reluctant to endorse strike calls except as a last resort.

The NUT has lost thousands of members in recent years, and is likely to lose more if teachers see its demands as unrealistic. The leadership will try to minimise the risk of strikes by separating debates on policy from proposals for industrial action. By postponing decisions on action until Tuesday, the last morning of the conference, they hope to allow moderates to express dissatisfaction without committing the union to action that will not be supported by the membership.

The delegates are unlikely to accept this manoeuvre when the conference opens this morning. Hard left groups have won an increased share of conference places, and are expected to command almost half the votes. They will press for action today both on national curriculum tests and special educational needs. Militant London associations propose support for teachers who refuse to administer or mark tests due next month, and want members not to co-operate with pilot tests for 14-year-olds.

There will also be a call for a boycott of next year's tests if the government refuses to scrap them before the end of the year. Left wingers believe that they lost the 1991 ballot because of the assessment of seven-year-olds had already begun, so they are not risking a repeat this year. A

Lockerbie hopes fade

The British lawyer for two Libyans wanted for the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie dampened earlier hopes that they would agree to stand trial in the West.

Stephen Mitchell told Sky Television News that the accused Libyans have always said that they would travel to any country "where they could get a fair trial". They asked us to recognise that a trial in the US or in Scotland would itself be unlikely to be understood to be seen to be a fair trial. Page 8

Job sacrifice

Workers asked to find cost savings in the accounts department of Rover, one of Britain's biggest companies, found a dramatic if effective solution: they sacked themselves. Page 3

Istanbul raid

Six women and a central committee member were among 11 Turkish guerrillas of the Dev Sol group killed when the police, apparently tipped off by an informer, raided flats in Istanbul. Page 10

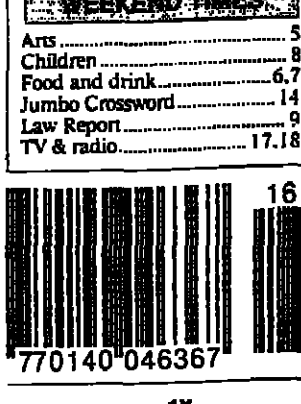
Lloyd's plea

Hundreds of Lloyd's names could be ruined after failure of a court action to stop Lloyd's calling in assets. A new appeal is planned next week. Page 17

£40m kick-off

Football's new Premier League is being offered a sponsorship package of £40 million over four years by ITV, a satellite television sports channel and an advertising company. Page 32

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Brush off a sad epitaph to the prime minister who never was emerged yesterday as this portrait of Neil Kinnock, the retiring Labour leader, was left homeless. The oil painting by Pamela Mussen was once destined to accompany Mr Kinnock triumphantly into a new home in Downing Street. The MP Adam Ingram, Mr Kinnock's parliamentary aide, said: "I heard talk of this portrait during the campaign and we assumed it would hang in No 10. Now I don't know what will happen to it." A disappointed Miss Mussen said she had offered to paint Mr Kinnock from photographs as a gesture of her support for the Labour party. She said: "After the election result they still said they wanted it. Wherever it goes I'll be honoured. I like and respect Neil Kinnock and was sad to see him go. I'd like him to have it."

Fundamentalist warriors threaten to storm Kabul

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

AFGHANISTAN was on the brink of conflict between rival Mujahidin armies yesterday after one fundamentalist group warned that it would order its men to storm Kabul if the besieged government did not surrender power to a council of its nominees.

The warning came amid conflicting reports over the whereabouts of President Najibullah, who fled on Thursday and was reported to be hiding in a United Nations office in Kabul. Benon Sevan, the UN special envoy, was attempting to negotiate safe passage for him from Afghanistan, according to an official of the ruling Watan party.

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a Pushtun and leader of the powerful fundamentalist Hezb-e-Islami party, said he had ordered his fighters to enter the capital to foil "international bids" to put together a coalition between the government and other Mujahidin groups. He claimed also that his fighters had captured Herat, the largest city in the world fair is to open.

However, the rival guerrilla army of the Jamiat-Islami, commanded by Ahmad Shah Masood, a Tajik, was reported to be only 15 miles from Kabul, and was attempting to negotiate with the four-man council appointed to succeed President Najibullah. Abdul Wakil, the

foreign minister, travelled to Mr Masood's mountain headquarters at Charikar to negotiate with him, the first time that such a meeting had been publicly acknowledged.

Kabul was largely cut off from the outside world yesterday, but there were reports of continuous gunfire, rockets and heavy artillery as government forces on the southern outskirts attempted to hold off the advancing guerrillas.

A statement released in Pakistan by Mr Hekmatyar accused Iran of supporting rival Mujahidin. He said that if the various groups failed to agree quickly on an interim arrangement he would be compelled to order his commanders around Kabul to form a council to take over. He said consultations were continuing on a list of nominees from all the Mujahidin parties to form a transitional council to prepare the way for an interim government.

Mr Masood has advanced to Kabul from the north while the Pushtun Mujahidin are concentrated in the south and east. Pushtun guerrillas gave a warning that if Mr Masood, known as the Lion of Kabul, was to enter the city, they would be forced to fight.

Briton is held as blaze destroys Expo pavilion

By EDWARD OWEN IN MADRID

A BRITISH worker was detained by Spanish police yesterday after fire destroyed a second pavilion at Expo '92 in Seville just days before the world fair is to open.

The Briton was named as Martin Smith, 27, a welder from London. Police said he was held after leaving the site and faces charges of negligence. He was said to have had ignored warnings from his colleagues that sparks from his welding torch could be carried in the strong winds

and set light to the highly flammable South Pacific Islands pavilion at the Expo '92 complex.

A police spokesman said the man had been detained as part of an investigation into the cause of the fire but gave no further details. Yesterday's fire was extinguished within 90 minutes. There were no reports of injuries, a fire de

Continued on page 16, col 3

Photograph, page 10
Saturday Review, page 4

Clergy question truth of risen Christ

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

CHURCHGOERS who brave hard-backed wooden pews to renew their faith in salvation this Easter might be in for a spiritual shock when they return home and switch on their television sets.

Clergy who do not believe in the bodily resurrection, the divinity of Christ or the transcendence of God "come out" in a documentary due to be broadcast tomorrow night.

Some of the clergy, who admit they do not believe the literal truth of the creed they preach, belong to an informal network that grew out of the Sea of Faith television series, in which the Rev Don Cupitt, dean of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, explained his radical liberalism.

For tomorrow's *Heart of the Matter*, the last in the present series, Joan Bakewell has persuaded members of the Sea of Faith Network, a 200-strong cross-denominational body of clergy and laity, to speak out on their beliefs or lack of belief. Despite controversial statements on the virgin birth and the resurrection, Dr David Jenkins believes firmly in God and in life after death.

Ms Bakewell said yesterday that during her research one clergyman had compared the church to a cathedral. "He said the Bishop of Durham was just knocking a few spires off the cathedral" while the clergyman himself did not even believe in the cathedral. Another told her the church was a human institution that might have to contemplate the possibility of its death.

Two of the clergy interviewed are Anglicans in the Leicester diocese. Asked whether he believes in the bodily resurrection, the Rev David Paterson, vicar of St Peter's, Loughborough, for 28 years, says: "I do not think so. On scientific grounds it seems to be difficult to believe. On religious grounds it seems to be totally irrelevant, if not harmful."

Asked what he means when he uses the concept of the risen Christ, Mr Paterson says: "I use it with great enthusiasm because it is about our own rising from the dead."

Continued on page 16, col 1

Clifford Longley, page 12

EASTER IN THE TIMES

CANVASSING SUPPORT



Richard Cork puts the case for a fighting fund to stem the flow of art treasures from our shores. Page 12

WORSHIP WITH CARE



Healthy respect for the sun has thrown fresh light on the traditional one-piece. Saturday Review. Page 20

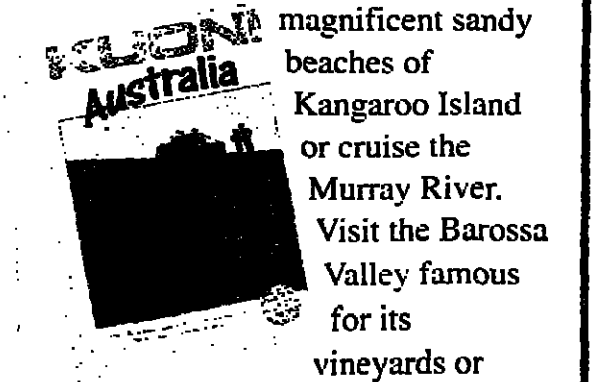
FRENCH RESISTANCE



Certain corners are, it seems, fated to be forever English. to the chagrin of the French. Weekend Times. Page 1

South Australia..!

For a great holiday destination visit South Australia and choose from the capital city of Adelaide, the beautiful coastline and



magnificent sandy beaches of Kangaroo Island or cruise the Murray River. Visit the Barossa Valley famous for its vineyards or combine a visit to South Australia with other Australian capitals. Look out for 'KUONI PLUS' free night, sports and other great offers. With prices starting at just £996 including scheduled flights there's never been a better time to visit South Australia. See your travel agent or call 0403 741731 (24 hours) for a free brochure.

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Rogue giant panda turns serial sheep killer

FROM CATHERINE SAMPSON IN PEKING



A ROGUE giant panda has turned into a rampaging killer, a Chinese newspaper reported yesterday. The panda, once known by villagers who petted her as the "Maiden of Great Beauty" because of her placid temperament, has undergone a horrible transformation from vegetarian to marauding serial sheep killer, according to the *Workers Daily* newspaper.

The panda launched the first of a series of attacks on sheep last year. It wrapped its front paws around the sheep's head, then tore with its teeth at its throat. First it would eat the flesh on the legs, then the back and finally the head. Then, sated, it would lie down and fall asleep in the sheep pen.

Although the animal has devoured 31 sheep, the people of Shanfeng village in Sichuan province have not retaliated.

Under Chinese law, those who kill pandas are liable to execution. Fewer than 1,000 pandas survive in the wild.

The party members of Shanfeng put the Maiden of Great Beauty under surveillance to protect her, the newspaper reported. Nobody attacked her and the dogs in the village were tied up to stop them chasing her. The villagers lamented: "We are sad that the panda has eaten so many of our sheep, but what drains our hearts dry of sorrow is that the panda is a national treasure."

The rogue panda is not as unusual as it might sound (Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor, writes). Although its basic diet is bamboo shoots, the giant panda is basically a carnivore and, in the wild, will always eat meat if it is offered. Pandas will catch rats or mice if they can and will eat any carrion that they find, fresh or not.

Studies have shown that bamboo shoots offer a barely adequate diet to

the panda. In spite of eating up to 45 kilograms a day, it is taking in only 300 calories a day more than it needs just to keep ticking over. This means that an opportunity to eat something more nutritious is not going to be passed up.

By and large, however, pandas have lost the knack of hunting, having opted for the easy but unexciting life of chewing bamboo. Only in the 1980s was it discovered that they will eat meat, when the naturalist George Schaller found animal bones in panda droppings.

Keith Laird, a panda expert who co-produced a recent BBC film about the animals, says that, on one filming trip to Sichuan, he was shown a panda that was said to have killed and eaten 35 goats. Whether any form of hunting plays a part in normal panda behaviour has yet to be confirmed, but it seems likely that, given a chance of killing a creature as docile as a sheep, many pandas would jump at it.

Gould moves to lift debate in Labour election race

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

BRYAN Gould tried to cool the temperature in the race for the Labour leadership yesterday by calling campaign managers together to work out ground rules for the contest.

He has asked the managers to meet privately to agree ways of ensuring a dignified debate and avoiding a slide into internecine warfare. Those running the campaigns on behalf of John Smith and Ken Livingstone for the leadership, and Margaret Beckett, Ann Clwyd and John Prescott for the deputy leadership, have been invited.

Mr Gould, the party's environment spokesman, who is standing for the leadership and deputy leadership after the resignations of Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley, said yesterday: "This contest should be a good-natured debate that should be seen as part of the renewal process the Labour party now needs. It should not be about personalities."

"The party expects us to behave in a civilised way and of course we are all good colleagues and so will find it

easy to do so. That is why our campaign will be happy to meet with the other campaigns to agree some sensible ground rules of campaign conduct."

The meeting is likely to take place between David Blunkett, for Bryan Gould; Gordon Brown for Margaret Beckett; Robin Cook for John Smith; Richard Caborn for John Prescott; and those helping Ken Livingstone and Ann Clwyd.

With nominations closing on April 29 and the electoral college deciding the new leader and deputy on July 18, Mr Gould is worried at the prospect of the race disintegrating into a slanging match between the contestants, who will have to work together afterwards. One fear is that personalised attacks could jeopardise the unity of the future shadow cabinet.

Bob Croy, the veteran left-wing Labour MP, urged the party to delay the contest until October and abolish the "gerrymandering" rule requiring the support of 54 MPs before a candidate can stand. He criticised the decision to decide the new leaders at a one-day conference in July when the party was already £2.5 million in deficit.

The MP for Bradford South said: "I am concerned about the gerrymandering of the electoral college that took place in 1988 when the qualifying number of nomination votes was moved from 5 per cent to 20 per cent. This means that in the current position, a maximum of ten candidates can stand for both posts."

"It seems to me that the rules should be changed to allow for a wider selection of candidates. This rule was introduced in 1988 to prevent any further elections which the leadership regarded as inconvenient. It was an erosion of the democratic process of the Labour party."

Letters, page 13

Boothroyd favourite to be next Speaker

By SHEILA GUNN

JOHN Major has made clear to colleagues that he will distance himself from the contest to be the next Commons Speaker and leave the choice in the hands of backbenchers.

Berty Boothroyd, a deputy Speaker and Labour MP for West Bromwich, is emerging as favourite in spite of Tory Whips' insistence that the Speaker should again come from the governing party.

The prime minister also believes that another Conservative MP should replace Bernard Weatherill, according to senior sources, but recognises that showing preference is likely to be the kiss of death for that candidate.

Miss Boothroyd's support, together with the determination of other candidates to put their names forward, points to the Commons holding the first serious contest and vote for the post of Speaker for more than 40 years. The former Tiller girl is winning growing support from Tory MPs, who believe the selection of Speaker from the Labour benches — and the first Madam Speaker — would be far after nine years of a Tory Speaker. Such a move is supported by Edward Heath, who as the new father of the House will be in charge of the selection.

Although Peter Brooke, the retiring Northern Ireland secretary, is known to have his eye on the job, some of his intimates believe he would drop out rather than push a contest with Miss Boothroyd to a Commons vote.

Hot on Miss Boothroyd's heels is Paul Channon, the former Tory cabinet minister, and other favoured candidates are: Terence Higgins, the former Treasury minister, and Sir Giles Shaw, who has served on the Speaker's panel of chairmen.

Dame Janet Foukes is talked of as the first woman Speaker from the Tory benches, but her majority in Plymouth Drake of a mere 2,013 gives her only an outside chance of success. The other Labour candidate is the businesslike deputy Speaker, Harold Walker, MP for Doncaster Central.

EEC SAUSAGE HORROR

Our reliable source says that EEC Commissioners are changing the name of the great British sausage to SPECTRANGLE. This is in honour of the tremendous success of this brilliant new strategy game from the UK. The Commissioners may be daft but seriously though SPECTRANGLE is probably the best new game since the invention of the sausage. Get your teeth into SPECTRANGLE at W.H. Smith, Harrods, Hamleys, all leading department stores and good toy shops.

Ulster talks to restart this month

THE inter-party talks aimed at finding a political breakthrough in Northern Ireland will restart before the end of the month.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland secretary, held preliminary discussions yesterday with John Alderdice, leader of the Alliance party, and met separately with the SDLP. He earlier rejected suggestions that the talks had been downgraded.

Sir Patrick met James Moynihan, the Ulster Unionist leader, in London on Wednesday and is expected to meet Ian Paisley next week. Sir Hugh Annesley, RUC chief constable, said there was no noticeable improvement in the security situation. He was speaking after having briefed Sir Patrick and Michael Bates, his security minister, at police HQ in Belfast.

Hunt for killers, page 16



Call for change: Liberal Democrat MP Malcolm Bruce listening to debate at yesterday's meeting

Scots keep up home rule pressure

JOHN Major is to be asked to order a multi-option referendum on how Scotland should be governed. It was announced yesterday by executive members of the Scottish Constitutional Convention, which was formed three years ago to pursue home rule.

The executive adopted the demand for a multi-option referendum made by the Scottish Labour party last weekend, and backed late on Thursday by the Liberal Democrats. The Scottish National Party, who called for a similar referendum 18 months ago, has agreed to co-operate with a referendum campaign, but said it would not join the convention.

The exact terms of the referendum would have to be settled by consultation, the executive said in Glasgow.

The Scottish Constitutional Convention met for the first time since the general election yesterday and quickly revived demands for a ballot to decide the devolution issue. Kerry Gill reports

Donald Dewar, Labour's Scottish spokesman, said: "The government should organise a referendum that puts it to the test with a wide range of choice for the Scottish people and with the clear understanding that, if the government is co-operating in this, they will act upon the results of that referendum."

When the SNP called for a multi-option referendum 18 months ago, Mr Dewar accused the nationalists of opportunism and hypocrisy. He said then that the SNP's proposal was a deliberate attempt to undermine support for a Scottish assembly.

Asked why he was backing a referendum now, Mr Dewar said: "You may not have noticed, but I certainly have — there's been a general election. There was no point in having a referendum at a point when we were working towards a government which we hoped would deliver."

Sir David Steel said that the government should consult other parties. "In the election you had a sort of indecisive result, where 75 per cent of the electorate voted

for constitutional change and 25 per cent against, yet the 'againsts' won." Conservatives claim that the constitutional issue was far down the list of voters' priorities.

Scotland United, established after the general election, announced that a "democracy wall", plastered with demands for a referendum, would be set up outside the Edinburgh building which would have housed a Scottish parliament. Its campaign for a referendum to decide between the status quo, devolution, or full independence will include a rally in Glasgow on April 26.

Scotland United and the SNP say that an unofficial referendum should be staged if the government refuses.

Leading article, page 13

Schools fear cut in opt-out cash

By MATTHEW D'ANCONA, EDUCATION REPORTER

ORGANISATIONS representing local education authorities have called for urgent clarification of government plans to allow thousands of schools to opt out of local authority control.

The Conservative victory in the general election, which safeguards the immediate future of grant-maintained schools, is expected to prompt a fresh burst of interest in opting out.

In a letter to the education department, Stephen Byers, chairman of the Council of Local Education Authorities, said that the financial incentives open to schools seeking grant-maintained status should be spelled out in greater detail.

"If the present funding arrangements continue unchanged, then large scale opting out will require substantial resources," said Mr Byers, quoting independent research by Leicester University. "If most of the secondary

sector were to opt out then an extra £590.8 million would need to be found."

Secondary schools opting out are currently given a lump sum of £30,000 plus £30 a pupil, although those sweeteners are likely to decline in value as the grant-maintained sector expands. "A number of governing bodies may be attracted by the financial incentives offered to the first wave of opted out schools and will need to know if the same financial benefits will be available should they decide to opt out," said Mr Byers.

Local Schools Information, the local authority funded advisory service, said that the radical implications of opting out had yet to be properly discussed. "Inspectors have so far spent 300 days in GM schools, yet no report based upon these visits is even proposed, let alone published," its report said.

NUT conference, page 1

Two posts complete reshuffle

JOHN Major completed his reshuffle yesterday by bringing another former Conservative MP, Viscount Cranborne, into the Lords as a junior defence minister and moving the Earl of Arran to the Northern Ireland Office (Sheila Gunn writes).

Lord Cranborne, 45, is heir to the Marquess of Salisbury but will be given a life peerage to enable him to take a seat in the Lords. He was MP for South Dorset from 1979 to 1987, but left in protest at the signing of the Anglo-Irish agreement. Lord Arran becomes Northern Ireland minister in the Lords after three years as the junior armed forces minister.

John Wakeham, the new leader of the Lords, and Lynda Chalker, the overseas aid minister who lost her Wallace seat, will take their seats in the upper House on April 28. The following day the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor, will be introduced in the Lords.

Souness on mend after blood clot

By PETER VICTOR

GRAEME Souness, the Liverpool football manager, was well yesterday after treatment for a blood clot on the lung following heart surgery. He was treated for half-an-hour in intensive care after the relapse and was transferred to a high-dependency unit at the Alexandra hospital in Cheadle. He was allowed only family visitors.

"Mr Souness has had a peaceful night and he is very well," the hospital said. "He developed a well-known complication which can occur after any surgical procedure, for which he is now being treated."

Thomas Stuttaford, who writes for *The Times* on medical matters, said the deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism suffered by Mr Souness was a common condition in those who had heart surgery. "People like Mr Souness, whose blood has a tendency to clot, tend to develop these things in the veins and they [the clots] grow until

they break off. It is important to get the patient up and around as soon as possible."

Mr Souness did himself a favour by leaving hospital fairly soon after his operation, Dr Stuttaford said. "You must keep the circulation going. I have experienced situations where patients have recovered from their operation and we've waved goodbye only to have them drop dead on the hospital steps."

Mr Souness is now in the right place, he said, though he would be receiving anti-coagulant drugs and would probably feel under the weather. While controversy over photographs of Mr Souness in *The Sun* would be unlikely to exacerbate his complaint, it would do little to improve his heart condition. "With any individual recovering from surgery like this, you don't want them under stress," Dr Stuttaford said.

Kop protest, page 31

City noise hides crux of Christ's passion

By ROBIN YOUNG

SEVERAL thousand people witnessed a re-enactment of the crucifixion in central London yesterday. While most were there as an act of faith and worship, several hundred more plainly tagged along because they could not think of a better way to spend Easter.

Victoria Street, from Westminster Cathedral to Westminster Abbey, via New Scotland Yard and the Methodist Central Hall, doubled as the Via Dolorosa, and a troupe of professional actors called Rites of Passage, dressed variously in blankets, jeans, and construction workers' donkey jackets, took the parts of Christ, his disciples and sympathisers, and his torturers and executioners.

Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, and the Right Rev David Hope, the Bishop of London, ecumenically greeted the audience and gave the performance their blessings.

Even on public holidays, though, the roar of London's traffic makes the streets a difficult auditorium. Christ's trial before Pilate on Westminster Cathedral piazza was not too difficult to follow, but less familiar episodes caused problems.

"Who's that?" people muttered to each other doubtfully, as St Veronica mopped Christ's brow. "Mary Magdalene, I think," was the most frequent reply.

Many tourists were left bemused about what was supposed to be happening on the green outside New Scotland Yard, when Simon of Cyrene, dressed as a modern office worker, was called on to help Jesus carry the cross.

A fleet of tourist coaches drowned much of the alliterative text of Tony Harrison's mystery play, *The Passion*, and a group of homeless hecklers swinging from lager cans on a bench at the back of the green were more audible for some of the audience than were the actors.

Music was provided by trumpeters of the Life Guards, the Chalk Farm band of the Salvation Army, and at Central Hall, Westminster, the procession paused for refreshments: cheese sandwiches with an apple at £1 a time.

Audibility improved upstairs in the Great Hall, where the troupe played out the Last Supper and the betrayal, before the audience disrupted the traffic once more to cross the road to Westminster Abbey for the crucifixion, played out to spirituals sung by a gospel choir. Collections were taken at Central Hall and in the abbey for the homeless in central London, and when the drama ended shortly before 3pm, many who had followed the event from beginning to end quickly hiked back down Victoria Street for a service led by Cardinal Hume in the cathedral.

London has some way to go before it rivals Oberammergau, but the clergy of all denominations involved in yesterday's event, the first of its kind, were delighted.

Doubting cherry, page 1
Clerical hazards, L&T section, page 9

Yorkshire miners vote for walkout

Miners in Yorkshire have given their trade union leaders backing to call strike action in a dispute over the use of outside contract workers to develop new coal faces at the Markham Main Colliery in South Yorkshire. They supported a series of selective walkouts throughout the Yorkshire coalfield by 5,131 votes to 4,984.

Ken Capstick, Yorkshire area vice-chairman of the National Union of Mineworkers, said that Arthur Scargill, the general secretary, was likely to call the action if British Coal refused to meet for talks or to compromise. He said: "The last thing that this industry needs now is any kind of industrial action. This industry is fighting for its life and I would have thought that the management and the unions could be sitting around the table talking about these issues."

Mr Capstick said that the growing use of outside contractors was privatisation through the back door. "It's as big a threat to us as imported coal or gas."

British Coal said that it was essential for the future of Markham Main to hire specialist teams of contractors for development work. Kevan Hunt, employee relations director, said the vote was "as sad as it is futile. The days have long passed when there could be any reward for industrial action. If it takes place, at any colliery, it will merely threaten still further an already uncertain future."

Environment centre fined

A government-funded environment research centre has been fined for river pollution. The Grassland and Environmental Research Institute was said to be "acutely embarrassed" over the leak of dirty water from its farm into a tributary of the River Taw in north Devon.

A sample taken at the discharge point showed pollution near the strength of raw sewage. Peter Mitchenor, for the prosecution, told magistrates at Okehampton, Devon. The centre, which has 80 staff and is funded by the agriculture ministry and the education department, pleaded guilty and was fined £500 with £300 costs.

New editor appointed

Auril Stevens, information director at the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, has been appointed editor of *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, and will take up the post in September when Peter Scott, the present editor, takes up a professorship at Leeds University.

Ms Stevens, aged 51 and a graduate of Somerville College, Oxford, has worked for *The Guardian*, the *Observer*, and *The Times Educational Supplement*, where she was deputy editor. She has also been a presenter on Channel 4's *A Week in Politics*.

Times ruling

A court in The Hague has ruled that *The Times* has not breached any trade marks by using the word European in the title of its continental edition. *The European Times* is the first edition of *The Times* and circulates in Europe. An application from the weekly newspaper *The European* to stop the use of the title in Holland was dismissed by the District court in The Hague. *The European* has been ordered to pay costs of the hearing.

Bank bombed

A woman was taken to hospital suffering from shock after a bomb exploded outside a bank near the Northern Ireland High Court in Belfast yesterday. Police said that the warning given was only seconds long and was inadequate. Damage was not thought to have been extensive. Soon after the blast, police received bomb warnings for other parts of the city which proved to be hoaxes.

Sea rescue

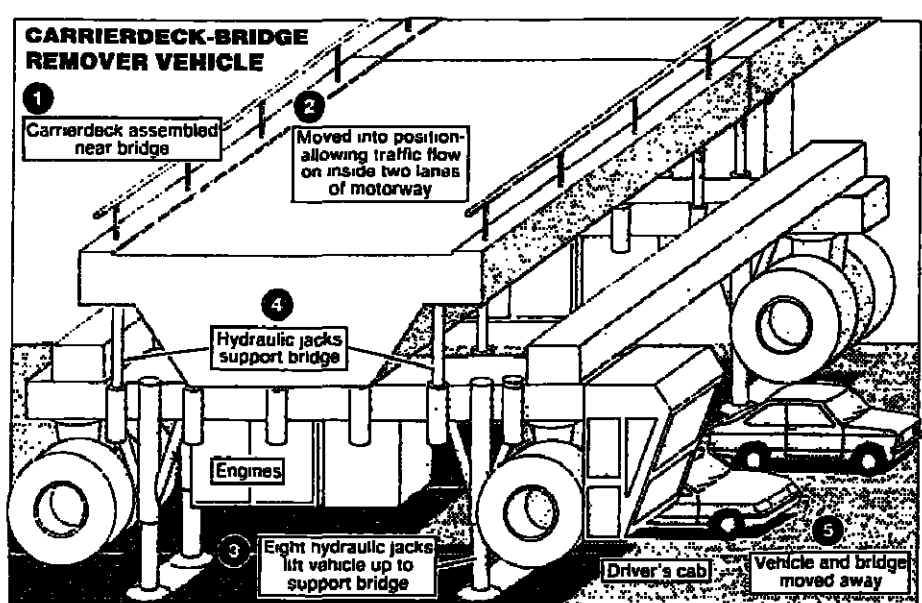
The aircraft carrier *Ark Royal* joined in a rescue mission southwest of Cornwall yesterday when a Sea King rescue helicopter stopped on its deck for refuelling. The helicopter was on its way to pick up a Spanish seaman on a fishing trawler and take him to hospital in Truro. It had been scheduled to refuel in the Scillies, but the *Ark Royal* reported that she was closer to the trawler.

Old bridges will crash out without halting traffic

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

A 350-tonne transporter designed to remove old motorway bridges quickly and without halting traffic has been devised by a British businessman. Carrierdeck allows traffic to pass beneath it while the bridge spans are detached. It is hoped that it will avoid the disruption caused last month when the removal of the Ings Road bridge closed the M4 in Avon for several days.

The machine was invented by Tony Preedy, whose company in southeast London specialises in solving construction industry problems. He was approached almost two years ago by Ove Arup, which was trying to find a way of removing a small piece of concrete over a road leading to Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. "I said, 'What is needed is a mobile crash deck, a mobile crash deck, and they said it sounded like a good idea,'" Mr Preedy said.



The transport department was approached. "They said, 'No problem, but what a pity that the machine is not bigger for use with motorway bridges.' At that point, all the lights started flashing and we have been burning the mid-

night oil ever since." Ron Marsh, business development director at Ove Arup in London, which is carrying out the proof engineering on the machine's design, said it was a sound concept. Sections of the machine, consisting of two chassis and cabs, each supported by four 3-metre foam-filled wheels, jacks and a crash deck, would be brought to fields beside motorway bridges. Once assembled, it would be swung through 90 degrees

under the bridge, or be assembled further away and trundled down the motorway. Under the bridge, it would stop with its wheels resting on the hard shoulder at one end and on the fast lane at the other. Eight jacks would lift it, and 24 hydraulic rams, able to compensate for any slope on the span, would be raised to support the structure on two metal beams. Workers would set up concrete blocks that would funnel traffic into the two open lanes. The bridge span would be cut with a diamond saw which would create little or no noise, dust or falling debris.

The machine's hydraulic jacks would lift the bridge clear and the span would be swung back through 90 degrees and driven into the field for demolition. Mr Preedy believes that the operation could take 24 hours, with the machine moved at night.

The first Carrierdeck, to be built by Wise Handling, an industrial hoist maker in Bradford, is expected by the end of the year.

Small find no life in

Lost cruises attractive

Sheffield threatens closure of city hall to cut £10m deficit

By Douglas Broom, Local Government Correspondent

SHEFFIELD council, which was relying on a Labour general election victory to save it from a £10 million deficit, may have to close its city hall as part of measures to balance the books.

Each member of the Labour-controlled city council has been warned by the district auditor that the council is "living beyond its means" and that action to reduce the deficit must be taken "sooner rather than later".

Most of the deficit has been caused by losses on the World Student Games, of which Sheffield was host last year, largely at council expense. Television deals intended to offset much of the cost fell through.

The government refused to help the council, saying that it should not have undertaken the project without safeguards. Opposition spokesmen promised that a Labour government would be more sympathetic.

In spite of warnings from

the city treasurer Malcolm Newman that the council was heading for financial trouble, the council's Labour leaders decided to run the deficit for a year in the hope that their party would win power on April 9.

Yesterday a council official said: "The Tory election win upset the apple cart. Now we must claw back the £10 million in cuts this year and face a further £53 million next year. It will mean cuts the like of which have never been seen in this city."

Gordon Sumon, the district auditor, has written to all 87 councillors pointing out the council's financial plight and urging extreme caution on spending. He said: "I have endorsed the warning given by the city treasurer that the council must not live beyond its means. I am pointing out to members that there is a serious position."

The council's Labour leaders are expected to attempt to safeguard education and so-

cial services, which between them account for £42 million of the council's budget, from most of the cuts.

Peter Price, the council's acting leader, said Sheffield city hall might be closed as a venue for concerts and shows. The hall's public safety licence expires next spring and closing it would postpone the need to spend money on new safety measures.

A final decision on the scale of the cuts will be made after the local government elections on May 7 in which a third of the seats on the city council are being contested.

Labour controlled Lambeth council in southwest London, which this year set Britain's highest community charge, has failed to collect £157 million in rates, rents and poll tax, according to a district auditor's report. The report, sent to councillors, said that the council did not know what its financial resources were and had no effective control over them.



Canoeist's Everest: two of the paddlers from all over Britain and overseas striking out yesterday on what is known as the toughest canoe race in the world, a 125 mile course from Devizes, Wiltshire, to Westminster. The race, in its forty-fourth year, has attracted about 650 ca-

noeists, some from as far away as New Zealand. It calls for more than 24 hours of sustained effort. There are 71 points where the participants have to get out of the water and run, carrying their craft around locks and other obstructions. The first 54 miles of the course is on the

Kennet and Avon Canal to Reading, Berkshire, followed by 71 miles on the Thames to Westminster. In bad weather it can be extremely arduous and, below Teddington on the Thames tideway, dangerous. For the senior double crews, the record for the course is 15 hours 34

minutes, set in 1979. The junior and single classes will be completing the course in four legs, stopping overnight in Newbury, Berkshire, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, and Ham, south London. They will arrive at the Festival Hall Pier, Westminster, early on Easter Monday.

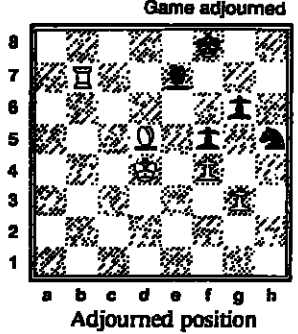
Short sets up winning position

By Raymond Keene, Chess Correspondent

BRITAIN'S Nigel Short adjourned the fourth game of his world championship semi-final against Anatoly Karpov in Linares, Spain, in what should be a winning position. Short, playing with the white pieces, put Karpov under great pressure and held a material advantage in the adjourned position.

Short, the highest-ranked British chess grandmaster and only the second to qualify for the world semi-final, trails 2-1 after drawing the third game when he looked poised to win. Jan Timman, of Holland, won the fourth game of his parallel semi-final against Artur Yusupov, of Germany. The score in that match is now 2-2.

White	Black	White	Black
1 e4	c5	31 Bg4	Rg4
2 d4	d5	32 Bxg4	Nxe5
3 e5	Bb5	33 Qxg7	Qxg7
4 Nf3	exd4	34 Bx1	Qxg7
5 Bx2	c5	35 Bf3	Bf6
6 0-0	Nc6	36 Qx4	Qx3
7 c3	Kd5	37 Bx2	Kg7
8 Qx4	Ng7	38 g5	Qx5
9 a3	Bx4	39 Rg2	Nx6
10 Nxd2	N5	40 Rb7	Nx4
11 b4	Qx5	41 Bx3	Qx5
12 Bx2	Bx7	42 Rf7	N5
13 Rb1	Rd8	43 Qx6	Nx6
14 Rb4	Qx5	44 Bx4	Qx5
15 Rxb4	Qx4	45 Qx6	Bx6
16 Rxb4	Qx4	46 Kf3	Kf8
17 Bx4	Bx4	47 Rb4	Bf6
18 Rb1	Qx5	48 Bx7	Bx7
19 h4	0-0	49 h4	Ng4
20 Bx3	Rd7	50 Rb5	Nx6
21 Rb4	Qx5	51 Kf3	Bf6
22 h5	Se7	52 Rb7	Ng4
23 h5g6	h5g6	53 Bx6	Nx6
24 Bx4	Ng7	54 Rb7	Ng4
25 Rb4	Rd8	55 Rb7	Nx6
26 Qc1	N5	56 Kx3	Ng4+
27 Bx3	Qx7	57 Kd4	Nx6
28 Qx2	Rx4	58 Rb4	Kx7
29 Nxd4	Rx4	59 Rb7	Kf8
30 Bx4	Rx4	60 Bx5	Nx5



Adjourned position

Two held as body is exhumed

Two women were last night helping police after the body of a man buried on Monday was exhumed from a Bradford cemetery.

After yesterday's exhumation, in the Muslim section of the city's Scholemoor Cemetery, a police spokesman said: "Two local women are being held in connection with the death of this man, and are assisting with enquiries." The women have not been charged and police will not say if they have launched a murder enquiry. The man died two weeks ago, aged 47.

Search halted

Police suspended the search for the body of a four-month-old girl in the River Nidd, North Yorkshire, because heavy rain hampered divers. Her mother has been charged with attempting to cause grievous bodily harm.

House stripped

Burglars stole a man's entire belongings, valued at more than £30,000, when he left them overnight in his new home near Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, before moving in.

Budgie cooked

Thieves microwaved a budgerigar in a raid on an old people's day centre. They squashed the bird before cooking it at the centre in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire.

Saving the seed

Volunteer gardeners are being sought to "foster" rare wetland plants which are threatened by the new £46 million Aire Valley trunk road in Yorkshire.

Gas blast death

A woman died when a gas cooker exploded in the kitchen of her house in Wallington, south London. The explosion devastated the kitchen and killed her outright.

Heron chicks owe birth to injured bird

By David Young

MORE than 50 heron chicks have hatched in time for the Easter weekend at a Norfolk wildlife reserve. All are direct descendants of a female heron which arrived 15 years ago with a broken wing after flying into an overhead cable.

The heron, which had to have the wing amputated, built a nest four years later and after a visit from a wild male heron laid four eggs. Since then the site at Great Wingham wildlife park, Norfolk, has become one of Britain's largest heronries. There are 32 nesting pairs of herons at the park, most of them rearing newly hatched chicks.

Philip Wayre, the park's director, said: "I am very pleased at a time when herons are declining in numbers that in Norfolk we have been able to keep the numbers up, thanks to that wild heron finding our injured bird."

Heron is not an endangered species but is protected and in Cleveland they have forced the rerouting of 400,000-volt power lines

from a new power station. A heronry is on one of two proposed paths for pylons to take electricity from the ICI Enron power station.

The National Grid asked the energy department for permission to divert the power line a mile and a half around a wood near Stockton-on-Tees where the birds breed. Oliver Sherratt, of Cleveland Wildlife Trust, said: "We are absolutely delighted they have taken our comments on board."

A National Grid spokesman said: "Because heronries are relatively rare, we have taken the advice of the Cleveland Wildlife Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The last thing we want to do is impose upon the birds. We are trying to be as sensitive as possible but there are going to be costs."

The British Trust for Ornithology has appealed to bird-lovers to continue feeding birds in their garden for several more weeks because natural supplies of food are still depleted after the winter.

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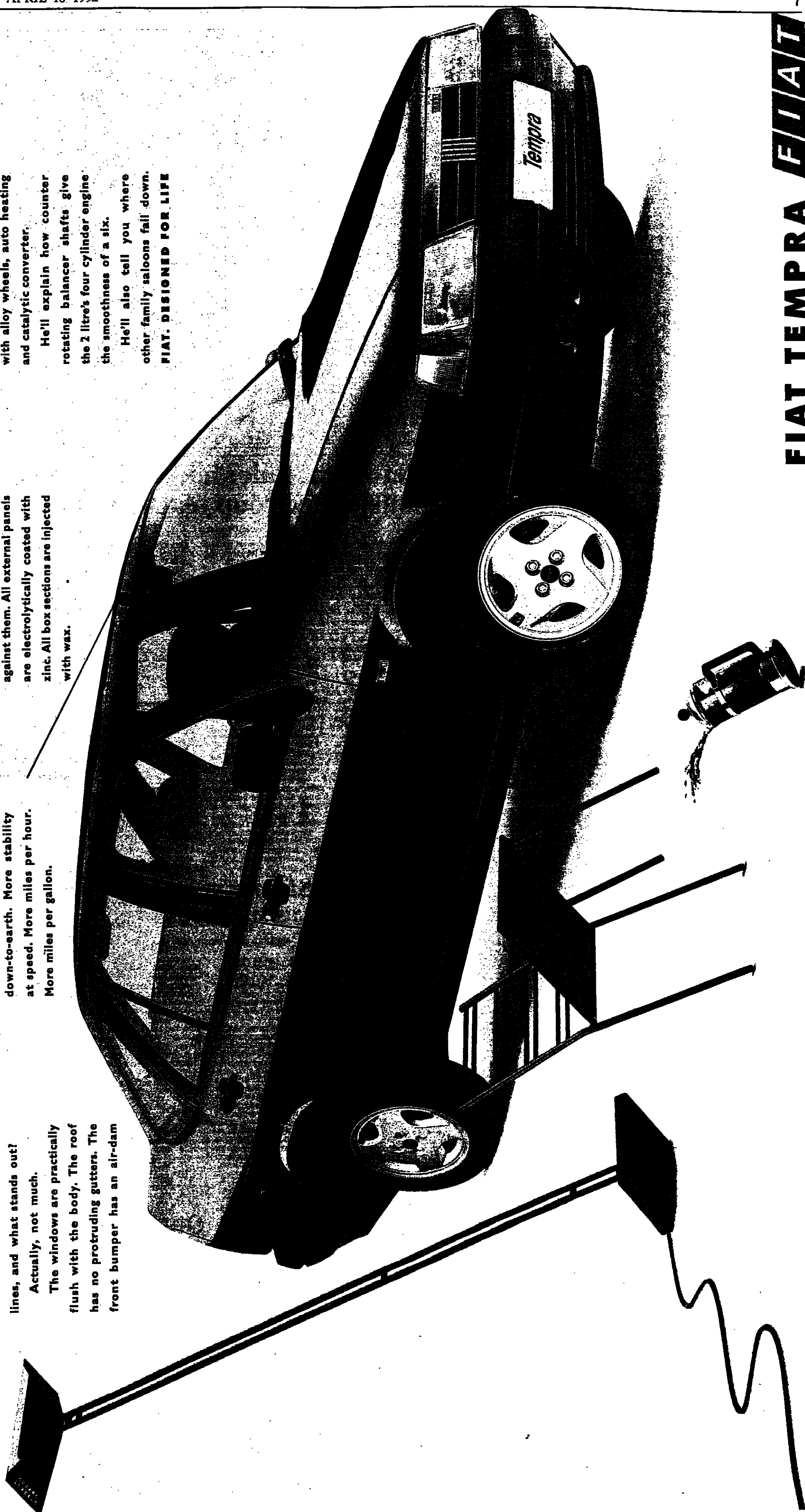
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FIAT TEMPRATI

Lockerbie pair would accept 'fair trial' in Scotland or US

NEW efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict over the two Libyans suspected of involvement in 1988's Lockerbie bombing were under way last night after a surprise claim by the Libyan lawyer representing them that they were now willing to stand trial in Scotland or America, if a fair hearing could be guaranteed.

Egypt was understood to be among the countries involved in behind-the-scenes discussions. But it denied a report from the United Nations in New York that it had sought permission for a plane to bring Colonel Muammar Gaddafi to Cairo for talks with President Mubarak.

The claim by the Tripoli lawyer, Ibrahim Lagwell, in an interview with the Reuters news agency, was the first time it had been stated that the two accused men — Abdel Basset Ali Al-Megrahi and Lamun Khalifa Fhimah — might submit voluntarily to a trial in America or Britain as demanded by the UN Security Council.

The offer, thought by diplomats to reflect a loss of nerve by Colonel Gaddafi, would in itself be insufficient to end

A surprise claim by a Libyan lawyer has intrigued the West. Christopher Walker writes from Cairo

sanctions, even if taken up. But Arab officials claimed it would increase feeling in the Islamic world against the sanctions and make it harder for them to be maintained. The offer was treated cautiously in the West, but not dismissed out of hand as previous Libyan ploys had been. The move led to speculation that the pressure of sanctions, imposed on April 15, and the degree of international isolation they had brought, had prompted Libya to seek a way out in spite of the risks that the two might reveal embarrassing details of the case in Western courts.

Lawrence Eagleburger, the American deputy secretary of state, said that Washington would have to see whether the offer was "serious". He said: "We have had so many offers and then so many offers withdrawn that I think we are

going to have to wait and see if this is serious or not."

A British lawyer, Stephen Mitchell, who also represented the two accused Libyans, claimed that because of adverse pre-trial publicity it was unlikely that his clients could get a fair trial in Britain or America. But another possibility being aired was a trial in France, the third main driving force behind the UN sanctions resolution.

In an apparent contradiction of the report from Tripoli, Mr Mitchell said: "The accused have at all times said they would be prepared to go to any country where they could get a fair trial... They recognised that a trial in Tripoli would be unlikely to be understood to be a fair trial by the Western people. But equally they asked us to recognise that a trial in the US or in Scotland would itself be unlikely to be understood to be a fair trial."

Mr Mitchell added: "The problem is that such great publicity has been given to this case on the assumption built into almost all the reports that these two men are guilty. They find it very difficult to believe that a jury who have been reading the papers and watching the television over recent months would be in a position to deliver a fair judgment." In an interview with Sky Television, Mr Mitchell said that he seriously doubted the men would be ready to stand trial in Scotland or America.

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "Our position remains the same, that Libya must comply with UN Resolutions 731 and 734 [to hand over the suspects] and we hope they will do so."

When Mr Lagwell was asked whether his clients would be prepared to stand trial in Scotland or America, he responded: "Yes... at any place they can have a fair trial, even in the US or Scotland. But we must have the guarantees for that." He said the suspects must be dealt with by judicial authorities, and that Libyan lawyers should be present.



Hiroshima remembered: Mikhail Gorbachev, the former Soviet president, and his wife, Raisa, laying a wreath at the memorial to victims of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima's peace park after praying for their souls. The Gorbachevs are on a private visit to Japan

Peruvian leader admits he misjudged coup reaction

FROM CORINNE SCHMIDT IN LIMA

HE IS still riding high in the opinion polls, but President Fujimori of Peru seemed chastened at a meeting with foreign journalists yesterday. Once hailed as the man who had led Peru's return to the international financial community, Señor Fujimori admitted he had "miscalculated" the world's reaction to his April 5 coup. He now faces the possibility that Peru's international financing may dry up.

Whether aid is cut off may depend on a mission of the Organisation of American States due to arrive in Peru on Monday. Western foreign ministers last Monday "profoundly deplored" Señor Fujimori's decision to dissolve parliament, dismiss the judiciary and suspend the constitution. But their resolution stopped short of economic sanctions, calling instead for a mission to visit Peru and

promote a negotiated return to democracy. The resolution also invited countries to "re-evaluate" their aid to Peru.

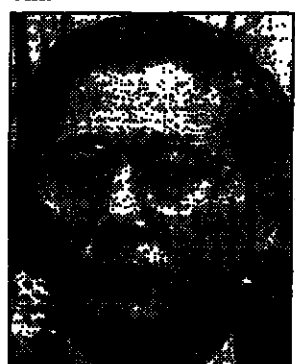
Yesterday Señor Fujimori promised to "listen with great attention and respect" to the OAS mission. He promised to respect press freedom, hold municipal and regional elections in November, and said he hoped that a new Congress could be elected in "much less" time than the 18 months announced previously. On May 1, he said, he will hold a "national dialogue," in which "all political groups will participate, without exception."

His words were much more conciliatory than just a few nights ago, when he told businessmen that the constitutional system he had dissolved had been "a dictatorship of ineptitude" and a "bribeocracy."

Foreign sanctions threaten Peru's fragile economic stability. The United States has been particularly critical of Señor Fujimori and suspended new aid, as did Germany. Peru pays about \$70 million (£40 million) per month on its foreign debt. Raúl Salazar, an economist, said that to

make those payments "the government depends on foreign aid". Señor Salazar added that the situation would become even more difficult later this year, when Peru is scheduled to renegotiate a \$1.5 billion (£1 billion) debt.

Peruvians were poor when Señor Fujimori took office in July 1990. But according to Félix Jiménez, another economist, they are much poorer now. Under the Fujimori government's strict austerity program, Peruvians' buying power has dropped by 30 per cent.



Fujimori: taking more conciliatory approach

Shamir vents anger as support slides

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN JERUSALEM

YITZHAK Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, yesterday lashed out at his critics at home and abroad as the latest opinion poll showed his ruling Likud party losing more ground to the opposition Labour party.

In *The Jerusalem Post*, he sought to counter repeated criticism of his government's handling of domestic and foreign policy by accusing the Bush administration of making secret deals with the Arabs against Israel. The move was seen as an attempt to deflect mounting criticism of his leadership, which has suffered a series of setbacks in the past two months: the refusal of the White House to grant Israel \$10 billion (£6 billion) in loan guarantees to help absorb Russian immigrants; growing unemployment; the election of the populist leader Yitzhak Rabin to head the Labour party; and most recently the serious rifts within the Likud leadership.

"In the beginning we were under the impression that the Americans were interested in reaching a compromise," said Mr Shamir. "Afterwards it materialised that they were not. And why not? Because apparently in the meantime they promised the Arabs, so the Arabs say, that the guarantees would not be granted."

Mr Shamir said later that Israel was seeking financial aid from Germany. Responding to a report that Bonn had rejected a request for help in integrating Jewish immigrants, he told Israel Radio: "I would not say that there is a final negative answer here."

His explanations for the poor state of Israeli-American relations and his threat to boycott multilateral peace talks in May if Palestinians are represented at the negotiating table are likely to satisfy his right-wing supporters. However, they do not seem to have eased the minds of a majority of the electorate who

will go to the polls on June 23 in the country's 13th general election knowing that their choice could decide the fate of the stalled Middle East peace negotiations.

A poll conducted by the Smith Research Institute and published in the Hebrew daily *Davar* yesterday showed Labour winning 34 per cent of the popular support, with Likud trailing at 29 per cent.

Kim's junket seals socialist dynasty

FROM DAVID WAITS IN PYONGYANG

Soviet-built tanks rolled through Kim Il Sung Square in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, yesterday, ending the 12 million, three-day party for the "Great Leader's" 80th birthday and setting the seal on the succession of his son, Kim Jong Il.

The military display ended a dazzlingly colourful celebration which included mass games by 100,000 schoolchildren, revolutionary opera and street dancing in a crescendo of carefully managed adulation for President Kim, the world's longest-serving head of state.

Although the son played no public part in the celebrations, an announcement shortly beforehand said that he had been named supreme commander of the armed forces, completing his takeover of state duties. The army is understood to have been the last centre of resistance to his attaining this role, and thus instituting the first socialist dynasty.

Searching for something to give a man who has everything — including the country's 20 million population in the palm of his hand — the central committee of the Korean Workers' party awarded the "Great Leader" the title of Generalissimo.

Puzzled Koreans now have another handle that they are compelled to use whenever they refer to Kim Il Sung. The other options are: "Great Leader President Kim Il Sung"; or "Great Leader Marshal Kim Il Sung". In a country where students caught drinking can get three months in a labour camp, you make sure you keep the old man happy.

In spite of demonstrations that would not have

displeased either Mao or Stalin there were precious few "revolutionaries" on hand to enjoy the fun. Long gone are the days when communists of all stripes would have flocked here.

President Yang Shangkun of China topped the bill, sitting at the right hand of his host to mark China's long-time friendship and its saving of the country from annihilation during the Korean war — something which Pyongyang scarcely acknowledges today. The ever-smiling Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia was there with his wife Monique, in acknowledgement of the Pyongyang villa that was provided for him during his years in exile. Yasser Arafat, the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, sent his regrets and a basket of flowers.

That other great standard-bearer, Cuba, could not even spare Raúl Castro, the Cuban president's brother, even though the "Great Leader" was looking after the bills. There were a handful of gloomy East Europeans and representatives from the Commonwealth of Independent States who all looked as though they wished they were somewhere else. They were far outnumbered by the Africans.

More important was a 140-strong delegation from Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic party and the delivery of a batch of brown Japanese-made luxury coaches at £120,000 a time, all signs of their country of origin carefully removed.

There were mass demonstrations in provincial towns and the people could also watch the celebrations on the country's one domestic television station.

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Kabul and new fight as sold patrol

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Russians hurry to quit Afghanistan as Mujahidin conquerors take over

Kabul awaits new fighting as soldiers patrol city

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

HEAVILY armed soldiers yesterday were reported to be patrolling the streets of Kabul, but the atmosphere was calm as the city's 1.5 million residents waited to see if fresh fighting would follow the departure of President Najibullah.

The former government leader was said to be in hiding in a United Nations building after being stopped by hundreds of guerrillas at Kabul airport, where he was attempting to flee the country with his brother. Mujahidin forces were in full control of the airport yesterday, and were searching all passengers thoroughly.

In Delhi, Dr Najibullah's brother-in-law, the Afghan ambassador Ahmed Sarwar, fled from his residence before dawn yesterday after apparently being threatened by embassy staff. He was offered protection by the Indian government. Dr Najibullah's wife and three daughters are also in India, the Indian foreign office said. A spokesman at the embassy, now sealed by police, said they had gone underground. Mr Sarwar's wife and Dr Najibullah's wife are sisters.

The Indian foreign ministry said that requests for asylum by Dr Najibullah and his

war out of Afghanistan, but delayed sending a rescue aircraft for fear Muslim rebels would shoot it down, an official said.

Muhammad Daoud Razmyar, the Afghan ambassador to Moscow, said Dr Najibullah was safe in Kabul. But he made clear his loyalty to the new council, and said he no longer considered the president the leader.

President Yeltsin, after meeting Mr Razmyar on Thursday, ordered an envoy to leave for Kabul to try to free an estimated 50 to 75 POWs still held by Muslim rebels from the nine-year Soviet occupation. "We firmly believe that, by the beginning of the transition period, there will be a final decision on the question of freeing all those former Soviet servicemen... being held in Afghanistan," the foreign ministry said.

A Russian plane, delayed leaving for Kabul because of fighting around the airport. According to *Izvestia* the Aeroflot plane was due to bring back an estimated 130 former Soviet diplomats and advisers. Three weeks ago there had been 300 still in Kabul, the last contingent from an enormous presence in the 1980s.

In hundreds of refugee camps in Pakistan, many feared that Dr Najibullah's departure would open the way to a factional power struggle and prolong a conflict that has already killed more than two million people. A leading Afghan resistance group accused Iran of sending Revolutionary Guards and pilots to the Shindan air base in Afghanistan to recover aircraft there or to use them against mujahidin fighters converging on Kabul.

The Pakistan-based Afghan News Agency operated by the Hezb-i-Islami group of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar said that two military transport planes belonging to the "Kabul regime" had landed in the Iranian airbase of Mashhad piloted by Iranians. Iran's official news agency, *Iran*, reported earlier yesterday that a plane carrying four unidentified servicemen had made a surprise entrance into Iranian air space before landing at Mashhad.

Civil war threat, page 1



Masood: the drive of his Tajik-dominated forces on Kabul is said to have prompted the attempted flight of President Najibullah earlier this week

Lion of Panjshir welcomed as the saviour of Afghans

FROM REUTER IN ISLAMABAD

Ahmad Shah Masood, Afghanistan's "Lion of Panjshir", is at the gates of Kabul and being tipped to play a key role in his nation's future.

Kabul government emissaries have reportedly gone out to meet the legendary guerrilla fighter, whose drive towards Kabul this week prompted the attempted flight of President Najibullah. In 14 years of fighting, Mr Masood has won a worldwide reputation as the most effective Afghan rebel commander. During the nine-year Soviet occupation which ended in 1989, he repulsed seven attacks on his native Panjshir valley north of Kabul, earning him the epithet "the Lion of Panjshir".

In the three years since the Soviet withdrawal, he has spread his control over much of northern Afghanistan and has proved to be an able administrator as well as a fighter. His civil administration, especially around the regional capital city of Taloqan in the northeastern province of Takhar, has brought a measure of peace and prosperity to the battered countryside.

Above all, he has managed what few other Mujahidin commanders have done. He has instilled military virtues of discipline, organisation and meticulous planning. He has forged the nearest thing to a conventional Mujahidin army, numbering perhaps 10,000 men and equipped with dozens of captured tanks and artillery pieces.

His feats are the stuff of legend in the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan, where his portraits look down from the walls and are carried in processions. Soviet and Afghan army officers respected and feared him more than any other rebel commander.

Supporters say this success has earned him the enmity of rivals, particularly Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the hardline fundamentalist guerrilla leader with whom he has often clashed. He is also criticised for the one-year peace pact he made with

Soviet commanders in 1983, on the grounds that it freed Soviet troops to attack rebels in other areas. A devout Muslim, Mr Masood has said his beliefs are the source of his struggle, first against the secular rule of Daoud between 1973 and 1978, then the Soviet-backed communist government that followed.

While his influence helped to make his Jamiat-Islami party into perhaps the biggest of the seven main rebel groups, his Tajik ancestry would make him unacceptable to Afghanistan's majority Pashtun tribe should he try to govern. Mr Masood, aged 40, the son of an army officer, was educated at a French school in Kabul. He studied civil engineering at Kabul University, where he joined the "Islamist" movement. When Daoud seized power, Mr Masood went to Pakistan where the government gave him military training. He took part in an abortive uprising in 1975 in Panjshir and was again at the forefront of rebellion only months after the communist takeover of April 1978.

Mr Masood came into his own after the Soviet intervention of December 1979. Commanding guerrillas in the Panjshir, a 75-mile-long valley northeast of Kabul, he survived seven Soviet attacks and constantly harassed the main highway from Kabul to the former Soviet Union. Supporters justify his controversial part by saying it gave him a chance to break out of Panjshir and expand his influence through the northeastern provinces of Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kunduz and Takhar. Last month he forged a coalition with militia commanders opposing President Najibullah to capture the important northern town of Mazar-i-Sharif, capital of Balkh province.

Mr Masood's rise was helped by the fact that tribal loyalties, a barrier to large-scale military organisation in much of Afghanistan, tend to be weaker in the northeast.

Railway plan for Venice attacked

Venice: Environmental groups were up in arms yesterday after the city authorities gave the green light to plans for an underground railway through the heart of Venice.

"It is madness," said Riccardo Rabagliati, head of the local branch of the Italia Nostra conservation lobby. "Venice and its lagoon are a very special environment where people must travel only via water. It is crazy to talk of an underground when Venice cannot even clean its canals." The proposed 20-mile underground will have two lines, starting from the railway station and the international airport. (Reuters)

Ferries collide

Lagos: Up to 350 people were reported missing after two ferries carrying an estimated 500 passengers between Nigeria and Cameroon collided in high seas. The Nigerian navy was said to be searching for survivors. (Reuters)

Killer to die

Sacramento: Pete Wilson, the governor of California, has refused to reprieve Robert Harris, 39, due to be the first person executed in the state in 25 years. Harris was convicted of murdering two 16-year-old boys in 1978. (AFP)

Aid requested

Tokyo: A United Nations conference has ended with a declaration calling on industrialised countries to share "as an investment" the estimated \$71 billion needed for environmental protection for the Third World. (AFP)

Crash kills two

NAMEY, Niger: Two airmen were killed when a French military aircraft crashed-landed as it approached Agadez, 500 miles from the capital. The accident was apparently caused by a technical fault. (AFP)

Cache found

Naples: Police who raided a bar in the notorious Spanish quarter of Naples discovered guns, bullets and drugs concealed in Easter eggs being hoarded for members of the city's Mafia counterpart, the Camorra. (Reuters)



family would be treated on individual merit. India still recognised Mr Sarwar's diplomatic status.

In a series of public broadcasts in Kabul the government, army and the Watan party reassured the UN of their full support for a UN peace plan. Boutros Boutros Ghali, the UN secretary-general, has expressed worries about the recent development which jeopardise the peace plan, and called on everyone in Afghanistan to respect the safety of UN personnel.

Russia was scrambling yesterday to get diplomats, advisers and its last prisoners of

Ragtag forces score victory

BY MICHAEL BINYON

THE mujahidin forces now at the gates of Kabul have finally won a military victory that long eluded them when they were fractious guerrilla groups fighting as much between themselves as against the Kabul government and its Soviet allies.

The mujahidin, however, are not a unified force. Although all are committed to an Islamic republic and opposed to secular socialism, they differ in size, ideology and tribal allegiance. The following is a list of the main groups and their leaders.

□ Hezb-i-Islami: Led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a radical Islamic fundamentalist. Believed to be one of the best armed and organised groups.

□ Jamiat-i-Islami: Led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, a

moderate. Controls much of northern Afghanistan. Has produced some of the most effective rebel commanders.

□ Ittehad-e-Islami: Led by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. Closely aligned to the militant Muslim Brotherhood and heavily financed by Saudi Arabia's radical Islamic groups.

□ Hezb-i-Islami Breakaway faction of Mr Hekmatyar's group led by Younus Khaliq, a Muslim fundamentalist cleric. Forces limited to eastern Afghanistan.

□ Harakat-e-Islami and Shura-ye Ittefaq-i-Islami: Two smaller Shia-dominated groups based in Pakistan.

tion Front: Led by Sibghatullah Mojaddidi, former professor of Islamic philosophy. One of the smallest groups.

□ Hezb-i-Wahadat: Coalition of eight, mostly Shia, guerrilla groups headquartered in Iran.

Ministers tainted by corruption included in new Thai cabinet

FROM NEIL KELLY IN BANGKOK

GENERAL Suchinda Krapreeoon, the Thai prime minister, has included politicians convicted of corruption charges in the new government despite having cited corrupt ministers as one of the reasons for last year's military coup.

Justifying his appointment of three ministers who recently had £2 million worth of personal assets confiscated, General Suchinda said they had been elected to parliament and therefore must have public support. One of them, Montri Pongpanit, becomes a deputy prime minister. Another new deputy prime minister is Narong Wongwan, who as leader of the biggest party in parliament would have become

prime minister after last month's election but for accusations that he has connections with the drug trade. The new foreign minister,



Suchinda: engineered military coup

Pongpol Idireksan, is the son of Pramarn Idireksan, a veteran from the previous government who also had assets seized. Military officers and other non-elected appointees occupy many key positions in the new government but are not expected to make significant policy changes.

General Suchinda is defence minister as well as prime minister. An air chief marshal becomes interior minister, a powerful post controlling the police, internal security and the media, and a police general is his deputy.

The general, who engineered last year's coup, did not run in the election and had promised not to take over leadership of the government even if invited.

Offers of marriage dupe many

Delhi: Thousands of small-town Indian men have been duped by tricksters who promised them plum jobs in Iraq in return for marrying widows of the Gulf War. *The Times of India* reported yesterday.

The Iraqi embassy here has over the past month been flooded by victims of the hoax who paid 60 rupees (about £50) each to buy application forms for marriage, it said. Good Friday was a holiday and embassy officials were unavailable for comment on the report, which cited Ambassador Abdul Wadood al-Sheikhi as saying enemies of Iraq may have been responsible for the hoax. Applicants listed their educational and financial status and boasted of sexual fitness. (AFP)

Japan's office Romeos meet their match

FROM JOANNA PITMAN IN TOKYO

JAPANESE women, who are not known for their assertiveness in the male-dominated workplace, won a significant victory in the country's first sexual harassment court case this week, sending shudders down the spines of millions of office Romeos.

The Fukuoka district court has ordered a publishing company to pay 1.65 million yen (£7,200) in damages to a former female employee who had filed a sexual harassment suit in August 1989. The woman, aged 34, had sought 3.6 million yen in damages on the ground that her boss had spread rumours in the office about her, alleging that she had a reputation for promiscuity. She tried to

stop him, she told the court, but she was advised instead to leave her job.

"As the first sexual harassment suit both to be filed and to be won, this is an historic case. We have a serious problem with sexual harassment in Japan and many women have suffered for years in silence, unaware that they could take legal action. This should force men to be more careful with their behaviour in the office," said Kyoko Hirayama, a woman lawyer who specialises in human rights.

Women office workers and women's rights groups generally agree that sexual harassment by men, which can range from verbal abuse to physical advances, is the

norm in the Japanese workplace. Almost half of the workforce is female, but most women are employed in secretarial positions. Dressed in dowdy grey nylon uniforms and known as "office ladies", they spend their day silently making tea and photocopies and bowing to their male superiors. They are so accustomed to sexual approaches by their bosses, that many had no idea of the meaning of the word *sekuhara*, the Japanese version of sexual harassment, when it first came into use in the media in connection with the court case.

A recent survey by an insurance company found that 60 per cent of 6,500 working women in Tokyo complained

of being fondled or being forced to listen to sexual jokes or descriptions of sexual experiences. Several said that male colleagues tried to coerce them into having sex. One-quarter of the men polled in the same survey admitted to telling sexual jokes in front of their female assistants.

In some of the seedier areas of Tokyo, *sekuhara* bars lay on floor shows in which scantily clad women posing as office workers playfully instruct their businessmen customers on how best to make sexual advances in an office environment. Office Romeos may yet learn to confine their advances to professional teasers in the dimly lit Tokyo bars.

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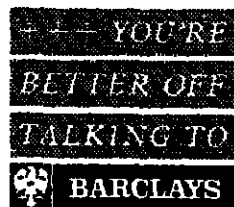
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Mysteries of market freeze the treasures of Siberia

Siberia's first venture into selling gold and other valuable items for itself was hardly a success but gave signs of hope, Mary Dejevsky writes from Yakutsk

IN THE snowy wastes of far northeastern Siberia, where they herd reindeer, hunt sable and the frost bites until May, two of the great mysteries of the former Soviet Union — gold and the market economy — are being brought together in the hope of producing a small miracle.

This week the local authorities staged their first experiment. It did not quite succeed: there was no gold, and there was almost no market.

But there was a sense of adventure, a combination of artefacts and showmanship, and a determination to get it right next time.

The city of Yakutsk was mounting its first sale of "treasures". There were silver and precious stones; mammoth-tusk ornaments and

one-third of the population are indigenous Yakuts who are not slow to accuse Russians of plundering their wealth.

This year Yakutia was granted two long-sought concessions. It can now dispose of a proportion of the proceeds from its gold production and it can sell 10 per cent of its diamond production.

For the first time, local specialists and traders must assess values. This week's sale was Yakutia's first excursion into establishing value. Led by the chairman of the city's raw materials and commodities exchange and leaders of the republic's gold company — formerly the local affiliate of the Soviet state gold and diamond organisation — Yakutia set out to see how much it might be worth.

They chose to hold an auction. But this produced meagre sales. The sellers' pricing rested largely on hearsay. That prices could depend on artistry, taste, rarity and availability of money was not something many sellers were ready to acknowledge.

The main disappointment for the organisers was the lack of gold and of foreign buyers. The foreigners had not come because their advertising was too late and too amateurish, they said frankly, and because the Russian foreign ministry had been difficult about providing visas.

A representative of the Yakut gold company said they could have sold their gold — nuggets wrought into ornaments — but they were not ready. Delivery of machinery ordered from Germany had been delayed by the collapse of the Soviet state monopoly foreign bank.

Next time the gold will be on sale. Advertisements will be on time, foreign buyers will get visas, and maybe Yakutia will start to feel the benefit of its "treasures".



Yakutia, Russia, is the largest republic in the country by area.

jewellery, luxuriant furs; intricately carved wooden vessels.

Yakutia is one of the Russian Federation's constituent republics. It has a surface area the size of India with a population of 1.3 million. Yakutia also has almost all Russia's diamond deposits and a good proportion of its gold.

Where "treasures" are concerned, any institution in Russia must tiptoe around bureaucratic obstacles and prejudices. In Yakutia, "selling off the family silver" — and gold — raises as many emotions as anywhere, with two added complications. Sales of gold and precious metals have never been permitted outside Moscow, and

Russia changes its mind on name

By Mary Dejevsky

THE Russian Congress of People's Deputies staggered through its eleventh day yesterday, with deputies amending one of their decisions (on the name of the country), standing by others (the constitutional ban on private sales of agricultural land), and giving every impression of being tired, cross and uncertain about their future.

In the morning, deputies eventually decided by a large majority to alter their decision of the previous day which made Russia officially "Russia". The new official name is the double-barrelled "Russian Federation — Russia", which has now been inscribed in the constitution, committing the "Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic" to history.

The decision to amend the previous day's adoption of "Russia" alone, followed vociferous objections on the part of some deputies from Russia's constituent republics and regions who had claimed



Wired up: deputies of the Russian congress listening to the translation of President Yeltsin's proposal to change the country's name from Russia, agreed the day before, to Russian Federation — Russia

that "Russia" smacked of chauvinism. But the proposed compromise, which had apparently taken much of the night to draft and was attributed to President Yel-

sin, initially found no favour either and was voted down. After an hour's unscheduled adjournment to allow for an explanatory meeting, and a rhetorical tour de force from

Dmitri Volkogonov, Mr Yeltsin's respected adviser on military affairs, the Yeltsin proposal was adopted in its entirety, and with more votes and as much elation as the

fickle deputies had shown the previous day in their vote for "Russia". Mr Yeltsin's amendment not only introduced the "Russian Federation — Russia" formulation, but also

amended article 1 of the Russian constitution to emphasise several times over the federal character of the country. Although the reversal of the previous day's vote was said to be a concession to Russia's constituent republics, voting figures issued by the congress's analysis team, however, showed that more than 80 per cent of deputies from these republics and autonomous regions had voted happily for "Russia" the first time around.

Attempts by Yuri Yarov, the acting chairman, to force a return to the issue of Russia's name, produced one of the congress's immortal moments. Accused by a deputy of manipulating the gathering, he spread out his arms and asked: "Do you really think that you can be manipulated?" "Yes," the deputies roared in chorus.

● Second thoughts: Leaders of the self-styled republic of Chechnya in the northern Caucasus, which declared independence from Russia last autumn, appear to be having second thoughts. Dzhokhar Dudayev, the republic's leader, whose regime survived an armed challenge last month, is reported to have issued a televised appeal for a joint defence system with Russia and a "single economic, reliable and information zone". No reason was given for the Chechen leader's apparent change of heart.

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Blake took sweet road to Moscow

George Blake was converted to communism by a Soviet agent who gave him bread and chocolate in a North Korean prison camp in 1950. Lieutenant-General K.A. Griegoriev, a former KGB general, told the Moscow daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. "I have been convinced ever since that the way to a spy's heart is through his stomach," the agent, Colonel Nikolai Lovenko, was quoted as saying. Blake, who escaped from a London prison in 1966 after being convicted of spying for Moscow, had been working for British intelligence when he was captured by the North Koreans.

Archbishop Albert Decourtray, the head of France's Catholic Church, said France should try Paul Touvier, the intelligence chief of the Lyons militia under the Vichy regime, to come to terms with its past. A Paris court had ruled that there was insufficient evidence to try him for crimes against humanity.

Marion Barry, the former mayor of Washington, had his six-month prison sentence for cocaine possession affirmed by an appeal court.

Richard O'Brien is to make another sequel to the cult film *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. He will be recreating the role of Riff Raff in *Revenge of the Old Queen*.

Snow and fog delay operation on Etna

FROM REUTER IN ZAFFERANA

SNOW and wind battered fog-shrouded Mount Etna for a second day yesterday, delaying plans for a spectacular American military operation to disperse the river of lava pouring from the volcano. But officials said the situation on its lower slopes was stable. On Thursday, they declared the village of Zafferana out of danger for the time being.

"We're here to show the flag. There's not much more we can do in this weather," said Captain Stefano Leuzzi, the commander of an Italian navy helicopter squadron.

The lower part of Etna was enveloped by fog, reducing visibility to a few yards. Wind, rain and snow battered the upper slopes. The leading edge of the lava flow, which earlier this week engulfed two isolated houses, was at a virtual standstill about a mile from the village. Much of the lava was dispersing laterally and not advancing. "There is relative optimism because of the pause which Etna has given us but at the same time we will carry on with efforts to slow down the lava," Nicola Capria, Italy's civil protection minister, said.

A computer projection by volcanologists at Sapienza showed that the lava could cut Zafferana in half if the eruption continued indefinitely, or if the lava was not diverted near its source. This could take many weeks or even months.

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Clifford Longley

Biblical truths are of their own particular kind

Must the Easter message of Christ's Resurrection be believed as a physical, historical, scientific fact? Can it be accepted as just an optimistic metaphor, or as something else again? On such uncertainties as these have generations of Doubting Thomases pulled back from Christianity.

As we see from the recurrent debate surrounding the views of the Bishop of Durham — which will be stoked tomorrow evening by the vicars interviewed for BBC's *Heart of the Matter* — the official, orthodox view has never been made sufficiently clear. If the bishop is "wrong", then what is supposed to be "right"? Do those who repudiate the bishop's non-literal understanding of the Resurrection believe in the creation of the world in six days? If they regard Genesis as mythical because it is contrary to science, why is that not also a good reason for rejecting the Resurrection — which sounds, to say the least, scientifically improbable?

A large proportion of those in church tomorrow will know such difficulties as these, and a larger number will stay away because of them. They have had no help from interminable scraps between conservative evangelicals and theological liberals. The popular perception of that contest portrays it as if "what actually happened" is the only point worth discussing — was the tomb empty or not? — whereas the real battle is more political than theological. It is about which way of reading the Bible (liberal or literal), and therefore which ecclesiastical power bloc, should hold sway in the Church of England.

People do not want to be made to feel silly for their credulity, nor guilty for lack of faith. Theological students and seminarians of all persuasions learnt in their classes what they manage to conceal once they get to their parishes: that understanding the Bible is a delicate exercise in textual interpretation, known as exegesis or hermeneutics. It is a careful discipline, with rules, and is far from a reduction of the Bible to the simple issue of "what actually happened".

Scripture is a kind of history, but it is not military or political history. It is what is called "salvation history". In so far as it contains truths, they are not military or political truths, but an autonomous realm of truth called religious truth. This was once supposed to overrule all other realms of truth, catastrophically even scientific truth, but that was a political power-play rather than a serious philosophical argument. More cautious church scholars always avoided such sweeping claims. They saw that religion and science must not conflict, but must co-exist.

The authors of scripture were divinely inspired, the church traditionally insisted, and so were protected against religious error. It became clear, as scientific knowledge expanded, that divine inspiration had not saved the authors from historical mistakes or scientific error. But if religious truth is not scientific truth, what sort of truth is it? An age too much in awe of science (compounded by scientific ignorance) may too easily reject any idea of truth except the scientific kind.

Clearly, religious truth is a kind which expects a personal response, not an arid intellectual exercise. It cannot, therefore, be approached neutrally. Like listening to music, reading poetry or viewing art, the disposition of the person responding alters the effect. It has therefore little to do with "objective fact" (although if there were no such place as Jerusalem and no such historical person as Jesus of Nazareth, there could be no "purely religious" truth in the New Testament).

There can be no "proof" of the truth of a religious idea by the criteria of science. But hermeneutics requires a grasp of the world-view of the scriptural authors, above all some knowledge of what errors they are likely to have committed because of who they were and when they lived. If they thought miracles were everyday events, for example, they might be persuaded an event was miraculous when a more sceptical generation would not. Divine inspiration is no guarantee against jumping to wrong conclusions.

On the other hand, if religious ideas are accepted as belonging to a valid realm of truth of their own, they can sometimes be used to illuminate questions of hard scientific or historical fact — such as whether Jesus actually existed, even whether His tomb was empty. But hermeneutics insists the emphasis must remain on that aspect of the matter which is truly religious. In responding to Easter as an event in salvation history, attention must move from the empty tomb to the Resurrection, the lesser matter to the greater, not the other way round.

A Canaletto has been saved from export but more masterpieces could be lost, says Richard Cork

Art sales of the century

It from £2,041,000 in 1983-4. So unless Mr Lloyd Webber puts his prize on long-term loan at Millbank, the gallery is unlikely ever to represent Canaletto's London period at its finest.

The prospects look grimmer still when we consider what might come on the market soon. Another Holbein, this time an incisive portrait of Erasmus, is still owned by the Earl of Radnor. The painting's quality, combined with the significance of the sitter, would ensure a price far higher than even the National Gallery's unknown lady has just commanded.

Or how would the nation's coffers cope if the Duke of Northumberland decided to sell his newly-acquired Raphael, the *Madonna with the Pinkie*? At present, this exquisite little painting is on loan to the Sainsbury Wing, but the National Gallery would be out of the running if it were placed on the market. The £10 million price of the Holbein *Lady* is payable over

three years, an arrangement which ties up the National Gallery's annual £2,750,000 purchase grant (frozen since 1985) throughout that period. A substantial contribution has also come from the Getty Donation, a £50 million endowment fund established by J. Paul Getty Jr to help secure masterpieces for the nation.

But since the capital of that great gift is never touched, its help in buying the Raphael will be limited indeed. The likely cost of the *Madonna with the Pinkie* or the Duke of Buccleuch's recently-upgraded Leonardo painting, *Madonna of the Yarnwinder*, would far outstrip the Holbein and the Canaletto. So would the Royal Academy's Michelangelo car-



Holbein's *Lady with a Squirrel* now saved

ving, the *Taddei Tondo*. Now installed in Sir Norman Foster's brilliantly translucent entrance to the Sackler Galleries, the sculpture might not remain there if the Academy ever fell foul of a dire financial crisis. After all, the RA was obliged to sell its Leonardo cartoon in 1962, and fundraising even on a hitherto unguessed at scale might not prevent the Michelangelo from leaving the country.

The most calamitous departure of all, though, would be the Duke of Sutherland's collection. On loan to the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh for as long as anyone can remember, this outstanding array of paintings contains some of the crowning achieve-

ments in European art. Pousin's austere yet elegant series of canvases, the *Sacraments*, now enjoy a room of their own at Edinburgh.

But the Raphaels, including the dynamically composed *Bridgewater Madonna*, are more important still. And the cream of the collection is undoubtedly the group of Titians, which spans the range of his long development, from the early *Three Ages of Man* to the late, marvelously unbridled canvases painted for Philip II of Spain: *Diana and Actaeon* and *Diana and Callisto*, both of which are at the very summit of Titian's prolific output.

No rational figure could be put on the Sutherland collection if it were consigned to the sale rooms. The National Gallery of Scotland would look denuded without it, and the purchase of these paintings by a foreign museum or collector would constitute the gravest loss of all. The present Duke is unlikely to sell

them, and he made sure that four of his less valuable masters were safely purchased by the Edinburgh collection in 1984. But his descendants might well be forced to consider auctioning the canvases.

How could such a resplendent collection ever be saved? If Mr Major's new government makes amends for the starvation of our great museums, and increases the amount of taxpayers' money required to buy the Sutherland pictures would be beyond the Treasury's reach. Nor could the Treasury's reach. Nor could the National Art Collections Fund and the National Heritage Memorial Fund, both doughty sources of funding when emergencies arise, provide the enormous sums needed.

The prospect is dismaying. Now that prices are colossal, the only solution seems to be a special fighting fund made up of donations from those wealthy enough to build up the requisite mountain of money. Flushed with his success at Christie's, Mr Lloyd Webber mentioned his plans to set up a charitable foundation to buy art for Britain. His suggestion deserves implementation without delay.

Getting back to the land

Public access to the countryside is still much too limited, argues Marion Shoard

Next weekend, walkers all over Britain will be gathering to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the mass trespass over a grouse moor at Kinder Scout in Derbyshire. It culminated in a pitched battle between rambles and gamekeepers, with injuries, arrests and eventual jail sentences. The incident sparked off further confrontations between would-be rambles and private landowners during that summer, after which public opinion appeared to concede the justice of the rambles' cause.

The mood of next weekend's celebrations will not be simply nostalgic, however. Rather participants will be looking to history for lessons in tactics.

Over the past 18 months, a spate of mass trespasses has shattered the rural idyll. On September 29 more than 500 men, women and children set off in biting wind and rain to walk across Thurstone Moor in Yorkshire. This great moorland block, whose wild, open spaces contrast with the neat fields below, is home to sheep and snipe, meadow pipits, golden plover and red grouse. But the general public has no right to roam freely here.

At the other end of the country, a smaller trespass ended in violent confrontation reminiscent of 1932. Pencarrow and Colquhoun Woods north of Bodmin are inhabited by buzzards and, in spring, speckled with primroses, celandines and yellow archangel. They have traditionally seen dozens of walkers every Sunday — until last summer when gates, barbed wire and notices forbidding



The 1932 battle of Kinder Scout: some trespassers were prosecuted and jailed, but their action won city dwellers the right to walk on the moor

access went up. Both events, together with 40 protest walks, took place on the Rambles Association's "Forbidden Britain Day", which is to become an annual fixture.

Rambles are having to re-fight their grandfathers' battles because, despite the Kinder Scout victory, the countryside is hardly less impenetrable to walkers than it was before the war, and in some ways it is even more so.

Kinder Scout itself has been opened to walkers, thanks to an access agreement negotiated with the landowner by the Peak Park Planning Board. Access agreements were introduced under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act in direct response to the protests of the 1930s. However, four decades later they cover only 0.2 per cent of the countryside.

Few rural local authorities have chosen to make any real

use of the access agreement provisions. Councils, which are often dominated by landowners themselves, have been reluctant to broach the delicate subject of access for the public with their most powerful constituents. Provisions in the 1949 Act for compulsory access orders where agreement with landowners cannot be reached have hardly been used at all. Here, councils are deterred not only by the prospect of taking on the landowners, but by the requirement that they must pay compensation out of their ever harder-pressed budgets.

While little new land has been opened to the public, opportunities for walkers which existed in the 1930s have been steadily disappearing. The agricultural depression which lasted until the second world war left the countryside dotted with areas of unkempt roughland unofficially open to walkers. But post-war subsidies encouraged farmers to

plough up most of this hitherto marginal land, and sometimes even public footpaths as well.

On uplands the spread of conifer forests has also curtailed opportunities for walking. More recently, the privatisation of land formerly belonging to public bodies like the Forestry Commission or local authorities has often resulted in the withdrawal of long-standing *de facto* access.

Private landowners seem no more willing to tolerate walkers than their predecessors were in the 1930s, except where they are a means of generating cash. Some are enclosing open land so that they can charge entry fees to walkers to compensate for the declining profitability of agriculture. Such arrangements already exist along the West Lyn valley near Lymington, at Ingleton Falls and Clapham Beck in the Yorkshire Dales, at

the Swallow Falls in Snowdonia, at High Force in Teesdale and in the Doone Valley in Exmoor.

The idea that access is something for which the public should pay is being further boosted by the Countryside Commission's countryside stewardship and set-aside premium schemes which pay farmers for permitting access.

The Kinder Scout trespassers were desperate for a brief break from the grim, slum-hit towns they lived in. They found themselves shut out of the countryside. Today's walkers are less materially deprived, but with the environment increasingly considered a communal resource, the idea of being expected to pay to walk in the countryside is as unacceptable to many as being excluded from it altogether. Both generations of rambles follow in a British tradition of rural protest rooted in the idea that — in the words of the "Diggers" of the 1640s — "the

poorest man has as just a right to the land as the richest."

This is not such a peculiar notion. Elsewhere and at other times, the right to own land has not been seen as synonymous with the right to exclude others from it. In Sweden, *Allmansrätt* gives every citizen the right to walk anywhere in the countryside where this is practicable. Germans enjoy the right to walk anywhere in their country's forests and most roughland, and the Swiss have the right to go anywhere in their woods and mountains. It is time we caught up. A mass trespass ought to be as out of place in the 1990s as a hunger march. Today we do not allow people to go hungry, but neither should we be starved of the refreshment that only the freedom of the countryside can provide.

Marion Shoard is the author of *This Land is Our Land* (Grafton, 1987).



...and moreover

PHILIP HOWARD

Well, that's over then, and we can all get back to normal life. Spring has arrived, with more cowpops than have been seen for years, and the chequered snake's head fritillaries are turning Magdalen College meadow in Oxford purple. Venice still floats above the Adriatic, and Rembrandt is in strength at the National Gallery.

There must be better ways of managing the government of a country than the frantic nonsense that has been going on for 18 months. It was an electronic election run by media and sound-bite, opinion polls and spin-doctors. More billions of words were uttered into the air than in any previous election, and not one of them is worth remembering. No great speeches were made. Not even many good speeches were made.

The two most memorable symbols of the election were Jennifer's ear and John's soapbox, both of them television stunts. All the parties spent most of their energies trying to prove that the other parties were unfit to govern, and all of them generally succeeded, and were on the whole right. The modern witchdoctors of the public opinion polls satisfactorily demonstrated the obvious truth that if you go around asking impertinent questions you are likely to get a lot of inexact answers. Their predecessors who predicted what was going to happen by inspecting the guts of slaughtered animals had a better record, allowing for a 3 per

cent margin of liver either way, and the occasional rogue victim that ran amok.

The government was the choice of only about four out of every ten who voted. In an autocracy, one person has his way; in an aristocracy, the élite few have their way; in a democracy no one has absolutely his own way. That is democracy for you. Like all human institutions, it is worthy of improvement.

And yet, in its imperfect human way, the late general election was a triumph for democracy. It may be an absurd way to run a country, but it is better than the other systems that have been tried for almost all history in all countries. The revolutionary notion that all citizens should have a voice in their government was invented in Athens exactly 25 centuries ago, in 508 BC. They got rid of the élite structures of their country, and introduced the new political entity of the demos, the people. This is the root name of democracy: rule by the people. Never mind a man's class or money or education. If he was a citizen, he had far more political rights than a voter has in Britain, becoming a Member of Parliament, and with luck in the ballot, a minister and a High Court judge.

The downside of this first democracy was that more than three-quarters of the population were the silent majority, with no voice on anything that affected their lives. Adult male citizens, rule, okay? But women, slaves, resident aliens, and other disen-

franchised: do what you are told, if you know what is good for you. Primitive democracy was absurd as well as unfair. In the 5th century BC, there was a moderate right-wing Athenian statesman called Aristides, who was nicknamed by the media of the day "the just". At the polls, an illiterate citizen asked him to mark his vote for him, in favour of banishing Aristides. "What harm has he ever done you?" asked Aristides indignantly. None, replied the voter. "I don't even know the fellow. But I am sick of hearing him always called 'the just'." The impulse to kick the rascals out is old, and the foundation of democracy.

Democracy was irrational and fragile, even in its birthplace. It lasted in Athens for less than two centuries. But the classical scholars from Eastern Europe who were meeting their colleagues at Oxford last week are relieved to be seeing democracy's untidy rebirth in their own countries. It may not be as ideal as Utopian schemes of government devised by loony ideologues of right and left, from Plato to Lenin, but in spite of the boredom and banalities, it is the best system available to us.

The people have spoken again in their democratic way. Nevertheless, apart from political groupies, all democrats will be pleased that there was not a hung parliament. In the same way that that old Athenian voter was fed up with the whole business, one general election every five years is quite enough.

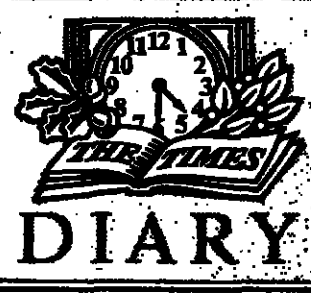
Saatchi's faction guaranteed?

CRITICS of the Tory election campaign — who included Mrs Thatcher, Cecil Parkinson and Norman Tebbit — will be dismayed to learn that a decision has already been taken at the highest level to retain Saatchi & Saatchi as the party's advertising agency.

Saatchi's, which was paid an estimated £1 million by the Tories for their part in the £20 million campaign, has already started work on a party political broadcast for next month's local elections. The agency, which is advising on strategy, is expected to exploit the role of the trade unions in the Labour leadership contest. News of the Saatchi coup will surprise those who had heard that relations between Central Office and the Saatchi camp were strained during the weeks before polling. The apparent endorsement of the agency, which has been retained on an informal basis for the next four years, will bolster morale at the troubled company. Any decision about the next general election, however, is likely to hinge on Saatchi's performance during the 1994 European elections.

The retention of Saatchi's, coupled with Chris Patten's insistence that staff be paid a victory bonus, has increased suspicion that the party high command will not, after all, conduct a thoroughgoing review of the campaign. Next week each department at Central Office will start work on a critique of the election operation.

"It would be a disaster to assume that all is well because we won," says one employee who was driven to despair by the campaign. "Painful decisions should be taken now."



Physician heal thyself. Professor Miles Houslay, head of Glasgow University's biochemistry department, has just been honoured by the Institute for Scientific Information for his profound influence on the Scottish scientific community in recent years. But when it came to receiving his prize at the Edinburgh International Science Festival, the professor, a specialist in the prevention of diseases, could not go. He was tucked up in bed suffering from a heavy bout of flu.

Great egg race

WHILE families indulge in their traditional egg hunts this weekend, a select band of the very rich will be contemplating an Easter game of a rather different nature: the forthcoming sale of one of Fabergé's Imperial Eggs.

The Low Trophy Egg, commissioned by the last Tsar, Nicholas II, to celebrate the birth of his son Alexei at Easter 1905, will be auctioned at Sotheby's in New York in June, becoming one of only five of Fabergé's masterpieces to reach public auction in fifty years. Experts expect the bidding to open at around \$3 million.

The egg rests in a cradle of ornate flowers, and originally enclosed the first portrait — now lost — of young Alexei, the haemo-

philia sufferer who was the direct cause of Rasputin's disastrous tenure at the Imperial court.

Fifty-four Imperial eggs were produced by Fabergé, of which 47 are known to survive. In 1985, the last one to come up for sale — The Cuckoo Egg of 1900 — was bought for \$1.76 million by Malcolm Forbes, taking his collection to 11, one more than the Kremlin. Sotheby's has informed the Russian administration of the next sale, but it seems likely that Boris Yeltsin has better uses for the new country's national budget.



Follow that show

THEATRE-GOERS planning to see the Tommy Steele musical *Some Like It Hot* over Easter need not worry about booking a taxi home. Chances are that a good proportion of the audience will be London cabbies. The show is offering free seats to taxi-drivers in the hope that they will spread the foot-tapping, finger-clicking news.

In the current recession, cabbies are fast becoming the equestrian of the theatreland. Two-thirds of commercial theatres offer free seats to cabbies during previews or, depending on how well the show is doing, after the opening night.

The idea of marketing shows this way was dreamed up nine years ago by Jeanne Cook, of Jeanne Cook Marketing, when she was promoting *Run for Your Wife*, a play which features a London cabbie.

"You often meet cabbies and their wives at the theatre," says one taxi-driver. "Trouble is if they're giving free tickets it's often because the show's no good."

Rather than calling in reinforcements on their field telephones, many of the British tank commanders in the Gulf made use of special issue Ministry of Defence credit cards. So keen was competition among the allies to be first to the front that the officers were ordering special navigational equipment for their tanks from local dealers — and putting it on the MoD budget, much to the annoyance of their American colleagues, who did not have the benefit of such a service. A ministry official admitted yesterday that cards had been issued to senior officers serving in the Gulf, but said: "I cannot say for certain whether they were used for buying navigational aids — I suppose it is possible."

Please try later

JEREMY ISAACS has admitted defeat. A year ago, after the head of the Royal Opera House press office, Ewan Balfour, was made redundant because of a cash squeeze, Isaacs said he intended to deal with important press matters himself. But journalists following late night stories who knew Isaacs' ex-directory phone number found him reluctant to answer midnight calls. Now the opera house, which is expected to announce a £2 million deficit shortly, is advertising for a head of public affairs and marketing.

Underst

There is a lot of talk about the importance of the Easter story. But what is the story? It is the story of a man who died for us. It is the story of a man who was loved by many. It is the story of a man who was betrayed by one of his friends. It is the story of a man who was crucified. It is the story of a man who was buried. It is the story of a man who was raised from the dead. It is the story of a man who is alive again. It is the story of a man who is the Son of God. It is the story of a man who is the Lord of the world. It is the story of a man who is the King of the universe. It is the story of a man who is the God of the world. It is the story of a man who is the Father of the universe. It is the story of a man who is the Creator of the world. It is the story of a man who is the Sustainer of the universe. It is the story of a man who is the Redeemer of the world. It is the story of a man who is the Saviour of the universe. It is the story of a man who is the Lord of the world. 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OBITUARIES

SAMUEL MAGNUS

Samuel Woolf Magnus, QC, lawyer who practised in Britain and Africa, and former member of the Zambian parliament, has died aged 81. He was born in Ekaterinoslav (now Dnepropetrovsk), Ukraine, on September 30, 1910.

IN ADDITION to writing a successful series of legal guides on British government legislation, Samuel Magnus went on to become a member of parliament both in pre-independence Northern Rhodesia and post-independent Zambia where he also served as Justice of Appeal in the Court of Appeal in 1971. On his return to Britain he was for six years from 1977 a member of the Foreign Compensation Commission.

Samuel Woolf Magnus was born three months after the death of his father. His widowed mother brought him from Russia to England at the end of 1910 to live with his uncle. Some time later she remarried and settled in the East End of London. Magnus was educated locally, eventually graduating from University College, London, with a BA in Semitics and the Jewish Minister's diploma from Jews College.

Magnus was an Orthodox Jew and in his youth was an active Zionist, becoming a founding member of the Federation of Zionist Youth. Instead of pursuing a career in the ministry, he turned to the law. After being called to the Bar at Gray's Inn in 1937 he practised in London until 1959. During this time he saw service during the second world war in the RAC in Egypt and Palestine. He was demobilised in 1946 and returned to his practice at the Bar.

In the previous year he



stood as Liberal candidate for Central Hackney and although he failed to get elected, he remained active in Liberal politics.

In 1947, in collaboration with the late M. Estrin (whom he had met for the first time at a London railway station when they were both on their way to the officer training unit), he wrote *Companies: Law and Practice*. This finally ran to six editions. Magnus also wrote several books on the land and tenant acts, on the rent acts and on business tenancies as well as contributing to Halsbury's *Laws of England and Atkin's Court Forms and Precedents*.

In 1959 he emigrated to Northern Rhodesia to become a partner in a law firm in Kitwe. While there he became active in the local Jewish community and was president of the United Hebrew congregations of the Copper Belt. He frequently broadcast on radio and television on matters affecting the Jewish community in Northern Rhodesia.

In 1962 he became a member of the legislative council of Northern Rhodesia and, when the country attained its independence in October 1964, he became a member of the Zambian parliament. Earlier that year he had been appointed a Queen's Counsel. Four years later he left politics on being appointed a Puisne Judge of the High Court of Zambia. In 1971 he was elevated to the Court of Appeal. However, he missed his family which he had left behind in London, especially his three grandchildren and shortly thereafter he returned to England where, in 1977, he was appointed a commissioner at the Foreign Compensation Commission a position he held until his retirement in 1983.

He continued his active participation in Jewish community affairs, serving from 1979 to 1983 as chairman of the Jewish Board of Deputies law and parliamentary committee. He also sat, from time to time, as a deputy circuit judge in the county courts.

Samuel Magnus was a man of great intellectual ability as well as a kindly and sympathetic person to all his colleagues at the Bar, especially to those just starting out on their careers. He is survived by his wife, Anna Gertrude, and daughter.

SAMMY PRICE

Sammy Price, jazz pianist and band-leader, died in New York on April 14 aged 83. He was born in Honey Grove, Texas, on October 6, 1908.

SAMMY Price was one of the last of the generation of jazz pianists that included Art Tatum and Teddy Wilson. His career spanned more than six decades and he was fortunate enough to be present during the pioneering years of jazz in Kansas City, Chicago and, finally, New York where he played a central role in the small group jazz of the swing era. He based his piano style on the blues and boogie woogie he heard as a boy in Texas, and which he learned at first hand from players like Cow Cow Davenport and Jesse Crump. As a dancer with Alphonso Trent's Orchestra, and later as a fledgling pianist on the TOBA black vaudeville circuit, Price obtained a solid grounding in showmanship, and this permeated all his work as pianist and bandleader. He developed a talent for assembling studio recording groups and turning mediocre performances by blues and gospel singers into artistic gems, and he adopted the persona of a confident hustler. In cahoots with record companies and managers, who could always find work as a pianist even in times of economic depression.

Price also turned his organisational talents to politics, campaigning in Harlem for Hubert Humphrey and Lyndon Johnson, as well as doing community work for the New York Police Department, who presented him with an honorary badge of office. He cared passionately about the rights and education of young black people and in his later years, he ran jazz education courses (including a year as artist in residence at Harvard in 1985) to try to convey much of his rich musical experience to a new generation. Price's musical career nearly failed to start when Professor Cobb of Waco, Texas, to whom he was first sent for corner lessons, pronounced him a no-hoper. Undeterred, he began to teach himself the piano, and when he finally took lessons, hints of a formidable talent emerged when he memorised entire pieces played by his teacher, Portia Pittman. After going on the road with Trent's orchestra, he worked in the Dallas area, making his first records there in 1929 with his Four Quartets.

Price travelled on the theatre circuit, which took him to Kansas City, where he stayed until 1932, getting married (briefly) before travelling on to Chicago and later Detroit. In 1937, he went to New York, and quickly established a friendship with the Decca record producer Mayo Williams. Their first collaboration, in May 1938, had Price backing his former mentor, Cow Cow Davenport, whose arthritis prevented him from playing piano himself. This marked the first of a string of recordings in which Price acted as musical director for Williams, bringing together outstanding soloists such as Henry "Red" Allen, Buster Bailey, Frankie Newton and Benny Carter to back Decca's stable



of blues and gospel singers. In his autobiography *What Do They Want?* (published in 1989), Price is dismissive of the musical talents of some of the singers he played for. In the case of Sister Rosetta Tharpe he claimed "I'd tell her how to move her capo and get the guitar in the right key." His efforts were successful, and Price earned well from these sessions, but used the proceeds to indulge a lifelong passion for gambling. In 1945, he recorded a string of boogie woogie solos for the King Jazz label, run by clarinetist Mezz Mezzrow. In them, he preserved much of the aural tradition of his youth, recreating the playing of Davenport and Crump. In more recent times, Price would delight in demonstrating these archaic blues piano styles, but his own playing went far beyond mere boogie woogie, as he showed in his sequences of recorded duets with trumpeter Doc Cheatham, for whom Price was a perfect, sensitive and harmonically sophisticated accompanist. He formed an equally satisfying musical partnership with "Red" Allen, with whom he worked at the Metropole in New York for much of the 1950s. He was a pioneer of jazz festivals, and organised the Philadelphia Jazz Festival Society in 1946.

Price toured Europe often, in a series of visits which began with Mezz Mezzrow's band at the 1948 Nice Jazz Festival. In the mid-1950s he returned with his own Bluesians (featuring Emmett Berry and Herb Hall) and he recorded in France many times, notably with Sidney Bechet, and later Doc Cheatham. Some of the recordings that Price felt to be his finest work were made in Europe, notably his version of *In the Evening* with clarinetist Sandy Brown, and the sublime *I Cover the Waterfront* with Cheatham.

Price was a larger than life character, yet his hustler's charm sometimes antagonised those close to him. When he got his come-uppance (as when trying to queue jump a dockside customs check by showing his police badge, which led to him being elaborately searched in front of the busload of fellow musicians he had tried to overtake) he was quick to see the joke, if grumpy at first. Many younger musicians owe their careers to his encouragement, and many young offenders owe their rehabilitation in society to the unseen side of his work. Although he never lost his Texas roots, Price became one of Harlem's greatest characters, and he worked hard both in and out of music to make it a better place in which to live.

C. P. FITZGERALD

C. P. Fitzgerald, emeritus professor of Far Eastern history at the Australian National University, Canberra, died on April 13 aged 90. He was born in Britain on March 5, 1902.

PATRICK Fitzgerald was a perceptive interpreter of Chinese history and culture at a time when very little academic expertise or educated taste in Britain had much understanding of either. During the 1930s he established himself among the front rank of historians of China and was recognized to be among the very few western sinologists whose work was of first-rate importance to those interested in the momentous developments taking place in that land. For almost 50 years a succession of books set forth the distinctive character of Chinese civilisation and the continuity of the country's past and present.

Fitzgerald's classical Chinese was, like that of his predecessor Arthur Waley, self-taught, but unlike Waley, who never went to China,

Fitzgerald, who was educated at Clifton College, went there as a young man in 1923 to start a commercial career. His intellectual interests and skills soon drew him into scholarship about the country in which he lived almost until the second world war, by which time he had mastered the language, read much of the classical histories and travelled well beyond the beaten tracks of China. He had also equipped himself with a specialised study of anthropology.

He first established a reputation in 1933 with *Son of Heaven*, a biography of Li Shih-min, founder of the Tang dynasty. But the book that brought his name before a much wider public in 1935 was *China: A Short Cultural History*, which soon became a standard work, admired for its literary distinction as well as its scholarship. It ran through several revised editions for over 30 years.

A spell in south west China took him into the highlands of Yunnan province, and a fascinating anthro-

pological survey of the non-Chinese Min Chia people was the result. His sinological skills were put to use in wartime intelligence and he was, for four years from 1946, the British Council representative in Peking. It was then that Sir Douglas Copland, who had been Australia's ambassador in China, invited him to Canberra to help in the post-war expansion of Chinese studies in Australia.

Fitzgerald's interest in the Tang dynasty produced another biography in 1956, *The Empress Wu*, an objective study of a rare woman ruler regarded as a bad thing in the Chinese official histories. But having been in Peking when it was taken over by communist forces early in 1949, and aware, as he was, that the Chinese people were unsurpassed in the length and relevance of their history and of their awareness of it as the common inheritance of the whole educated class, Fitzgerald turned to interpreting current events against the background of that past.

The Birth of Communist China,

Revolution in China and later essays were all written in the full consciousness that an authoritarian political system inspired by a state doctrine governed the world's largest population. With evident sympathy for the new regime, Fitzgerald nevertheless saw it not quite as the "new" China on which its leader Mao so strongly insisted. Equally, *The Chinese View of their Place in the World*, the first of a series of essays published by Chatham House in 1964, was a reminder of how unfamiliarity with any international system but the one of which they had been the centre for nearly two thousand years had conditioned Chinese thinking.

No less widely read in European history, and constantly drawing parallels and contrasts in his writing on China, Fitzgerald could also turn aside to such a fascinating sideline as the origin of the chair in China, *Barbarian Beds* (1965). In *The Southern Expansion of the Chinese People* (1972) he was able to explain the origins of the Chinese people's

distinctive view of South-East Asia. A fluent and cultivated style made Patrick Fitzgerald a brilliant expositor for the general reader. He was always aware of the broader aspects of his subject, summing up Chinese society or the nature of religion in China in telling phrases.

He was professor of Far Eastern history at the Australian National University from 1953 to 1967 and then visiting fellow at the university's department of international affairs, 1968-69.

He continued writing long after retirement from his Canberra chair. A history of East Asia, a study of the overseas Chinese, an essay on Mao Tse-tung and the historical sections of China's *Three Thousand Years*, published by *The Times* in connection with the Chinese Exhibition of 1973, were among many other contributions that continued up to his eightieth year.

He married, in 1941, Pamela Knollys, known as Sarah; she died in 1980. There were three daughters of the marriage.

Gillian Crow

Understanding a God who exists beyond gender

The New Testament speaks unequivocally of Jesus Christ as a male: circumcised, the son of Mary, the Son of God. In both His humanity and His divinity he is masculine. It also speaks of God the Father in words accredited to Christ Himself in the Lord's Prayer and elsewhere in the Gospels. At a time when women are shaking off the fetters of male domination to seek a just place in human society, what are they to think of the Biblical portrayal of a masculine God in relation to their place in the Church?

Some have found their answer in paraphrasing the text, referring to God in the wider term of "parent". Yet paraphrase is dangerous. It opens the door to a common temptation: to improve upon the original by according to the wishful manipulation of the interpreter. Wilful manipulation of the text is not the way to a true understanding of the Bible. Our and heresy may then follow on a "Mother" of a female figure of recognisable Christianity.

Yet language is important. Until recently the use of the word "man" for person, whether male or female, was an acceptable convention. Whether it is preferable to have a

linguistic service to "chairperson" is debatable; what is certain is that such linguistic changes are happening, and are likely to become the norm. Whereas the phrase "God become Man" was once capable of expressing Christ's taking on of total humanity within his physical maleness, that meaning may soon be lost. To substitute "human" for man may sound clumsy but in fact corresponds better to the Greek *anthropos* of the New Testament, which is more inclusive than *aner* meaning a male.

On the other hand, "God" is already inclusive. Although the word may in common speech be understood as denoting a male deity as opposed to a female goddess, nevertheless in Christian theology God is infinite, beyond any definition that can be contrived; outside the scope of male and female, or any other limits. That has to be held in mind at the same time as the fact that this infinite God has become approachable by becoming capable of being known according to human limitations. It is only by looking at themselves, made in the divine image, that people can gather together in sufficient understanding to make

the relationship of prayer and worship possible. And people are not androgynous, but either male or female; a genderless, asexual creature is not a normal human being. Therefore to be seen in anthropomorphic terms God must be labelled by gender. "He, she, it and/or all three" does not invoke the warm response which faith in the Living God demands.

The same applies to Christ. To be fully human He had inevitably to be born either man or woman. That did not eclipse His taking on of total humanity, but it does mean that it is difficult for us to hold the two concepts in balance, just as it is difficult to keep in mind that He was not a demi-god but both completely human and completely divine.

But it is vital that we do so, for our understanding of Christianity and also of the role of men and women in the world. It was as a male — and not as a sissy but as a courageous male in his prime — that Christ talked of gathering the citizens of Jerusalem like a hen her chicks and preached so-called "feminine" virtues of meekness and purity of heart. On the other hand, He blessed

Mary to lay aside women's work and sit at His feet with the men. He did not destroy or blur sexual differences but He enabled people to look beyond them towards a harmony which complements and unites.

In the same way He overturned the social and moral expectations of slave and master, friend and enemy, Jew and Gentile. He founded a Church which was meant to know no divisions of race, sex or status, which was meant to reach out beyond any imaginable form of human ordering to be a completely new type of organism. It is no accident that it came into being at Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit — the Third Person of the Trinity who is, nevertheless not described in personal terms or given a gender. Only a body which had outgrown pre-Resurrection constraints was capable of receiving and perceiving, both collectively and as individual members, the Spirit of God who is as indefinable and ungraspable as the wind.

In the experience of the Holy Spirit the Church was intended to be a new creation, made up of new creatures — physically male and female but, like the incarnate Christ,

transcending in the Spirit their physical limitations, able to see beyond the enslaved reasoning of the secular world to ever bigger concepts of humanity. In other words in the understanding of gender and of the role of men and women the Church was meant to lead.

Instead it finds itself being led — dragged — by the world towards a secular framework of new male-female roles. Questions about the priesthood follow the admission of women to other professions: the equality of the sexes is seen as a novelty in the very place where it should have first arisen.

The unwritten cry of the New Testament is "bigger, greater, deeper!" concerning both God and Creation. No language will ever express the inexhaustible nature of the Almighty nor the divine vision for humanity. Let us keep our God-given word pictures of Father and Son, which convey a small part of the Truth; but only if we see beyond them with the God-given eyes of the Spirit.

Gillian Crow is a writer and a member of the Russian Orthodox Church.

C. V. WOOD

C. V. Wood Jr. who supervised the transport of London Bridge to its new home in Arizona, and was largely responsible for the creation of the first Disneyland theme park, died in Houston, Texas, on March 16 aged 71. He was born in Woods County, Oklahoma.

NO ONE could accuse C. V. Wood of thinking small. When the first Disneyland opened under his supervision in California, in 1954, the world had seen nothing quite like it. With its huge scale, innovative rides, and almost excessive respectability, it was a far cry from the raucous frenzy of the traditional amusement park.

Disneyland, with its nostalgic population of cartoon characters, fitted the American notion of "family entertainment." Together with its twin in Florida it soon became, and remains a mecca for American families on holiday, while Euro Disney is attempting to create the same ambience in France.

Wood's pioneering work, as vice-president and general manager under the late Walt Disney provided much of the inspiration for the parks. After supervising selection and purchase of the land for the world famous attraction he stayed on as managing director for the first year of operation, establishing many of the policies that have given the Disney theme parks their distinctive qualities.

But his most spectacular achievement was, in 1968, the removal, transportation and reconstruction of London Bridge in Arizona, half-way around the globe. The bridge, built in 1831, had begun to subside under the weight of modern traffic, and the City of London Corporation must have been overjoyed to find a buyer when they decided to replace it with a new one. To sell it to America, where the selling of the Brooklyn Bridge is the archetypal confidence trick, was a delicious twist.

Some said Wood had "bought a bridge he didn't need for a river he didn't have" and there were those at the time who thought that Wood's employers, the McCullough Oil Company, had been conned into believing that they had really bought the more spectacular Tower Bridge. But Wood knew what he was doing. He dug a channel from Lake Havasu, on the California-

Arizona border, and there rebuilt the bridge which had been dismantled, stone by stone, and transported overland from Long Beach.

The City of London Corporation was paid \$2,460,000 for the bridge, but it cost several million more to transport and rebuild it. Wood proclaimed that it would become an even greater tourist attraction than the Grand Canyon. This was an exaggeration, but it has certainly attracted remarkable crowds over the years.

Although C. V. Wood was born in Texas where he earned a degree in petroleum engineering. Just what the "C. V." stood for, if anything, remained a mystery even among his business colleagues who knew him as "Woody." He retired in 1980 as chairman and chief executive of McCullough, but he was not yet finished with the entertainment world. In 1987 he joined Lorimar Telepictures, worked on its merger with Time Warner, and then led the latter company's entry into the studio-tour business. That assignment culminated in Warner's opening of Movie World in Australia last year.

At the time of his death Wood was president of Warner's Recreational Enterprises division, and was working on the expansion of Movie World to other countries.

He was chairman of the Committee of Publicly Owned Companies, representing 650 companies traded on the New York and American stock exchanges, a co-founder of the Mind Science Foundation, and a trustee of the Stehlin Foundation for Cancer Research.

He also co-founded and was a member of the board of governors of the International Chili Society, which sponsors over 400 "cook-offs" around the world each year, benefiting numerous charities. An avid devotee of chili — which he considered the great American dish — Wood twice earned the title of "world champion" in chili cook-offs and spent nearly 25 years supervising the growth of the organisation and presiding over the annual world championship chili cook-off.

He is survived by his wife, the film actress Joanne Dru, whom he married in 1954. He has one son, C. V. Wood III, one daughter and three stepchildren.

APPRECIATION

William Paling

THE death of William Paling (obituary April 15) recalls the incident in the Commons when he (or maybe his older brother Walter) called Churchill "You dirty dog".

The House froze. The giant rose, scowling, snarling, lips quivering. "Dirty dog I may be. But you know what dirty dogs to palings".

The House roared.
John F. M. Smallwood, CBE.

April 18 ON THIS DAY 1911

The first Stratford celebration was held in 1769, organised by David Garrick. From 1879 until 1926 the performances were held in the old theatre, a semi-circular building which was partially destroyed by fire. In 1932 the present theatre, designed by Elizabeth Scott, was opened.

THE STRATFORD FESTIVAL
Opening of the Shakespeare celebrations
(From Our Special Correspondent)

Stratford-on-Avon April 17. It is a perfect spring day. The call of April (and of Shakespeare) is in the air. At last the welcome wild north-easter has blown itself away, and the Avon flows peacefully between its level banks. London and the noise and bustle of life are as remote as the storm and snows of winter, and even the holiday crowd that since early morning has steamed and wheeled and footed it into Shakespeare's town seems less boisterous and more agreeable than the worst of humanity in the mass. And yet they are happy enough in their quiet English way, and all agree to see the strangers that have come to do homage and honour to Shakespeare's memory, even if most of them have no very clear idea of what Shakespeare means and what Stratford is trying to do.

Soon after half-past 11 the Mayor, Mr Alderman Deer, arrived in Bridge-street, bringing with him the Chinese Ambassador, and, as a signal given by the firing of a seven-pounder, unfurled the Union Jack which King George has this year presented to the town; its predecessor, which was the gift of King Edward, will, by permission of the Vicar, Canon Melville, to whose care it has

been entrusted by the town authorities, hang in Holy Trinity Church. In an instant the flags presented by 53 different nations flew out all down the street, at the top of their tall poles, the National Anthem was played, and a salute given by several hundreds of boys belonging to the Boy Scouts and the Church Lads' Brigade, who were present in full force with their drum and bugle band. The opening scene of the Festival had been admirably organised by Dr Green, the Secretary of the Shakespeare Society and not a single flag refused to do the duty which Stratford expected of them all. As many of the spectators as could find sitting or standing room then crowded into the Town Hall at the Mayor's invitation, and short speeches were delivered by the Chinese Ambassador, the Mexican and Norwegian Ministers and Mr Kirkpatrick, the Agent-General for South Australia. The company of speakers was not large, but between them they represented a rather considerable fraction of the total number of the globe's present inhabitants. And they all agreed in telling the people of Stratford that Shakespeare no longer belonged to them or to England, but was the property of the whole world.

The Chinese Ambassador declared that he was a "household" in Asia as well as in Europe, and was read by millions of his fellow-countrymen. The Mexican Minister compared him to a universal ivy which has covered the face of the earth.

In the town the main streets were gay with wreaths and fluttering pennants and all day long in the pleasant gardens of the Memorial Theatre, on the river and in the meadows on its further bank, crowds of people made holiday in the open air. The theatre, the outward and visible sign of what Stratford has already done in the way of carrying out its ideals, was packed from floor to ceiling and when the curtain rose this afternoon there was not an empty seat in the house.

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from page 1
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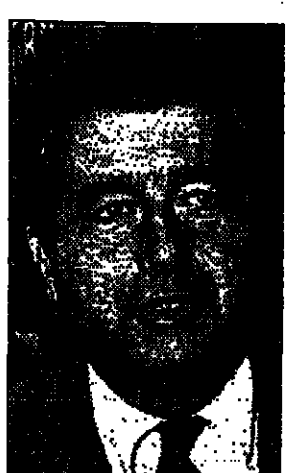
SATURDAY APRIL 18 1992

BUSINESS EDITOR JOHN BELL

MONEY

Fighting on

Carlo De Benedetti, the Italian financier convicted for his involvement in the Banco Ambrosiano fraud scandal ten years ago, has pledged to fight on to prove his innocence. He faces more than six years in jail if his conviction is upheld. Meanwhile, he will continue at the helm of Olivetti, the Italian computer company. Page 18



Shining through

Gifts are looking attractive once more. The reasons include the Conservatives' election victory, the continuing volatility of share prices and the uncertain outlook for dividends. Page 22

Power deadline

Shareholders in Scottish Power and Hydro-Electric have until next Friday to decide whether to sell out at a loss on their original investment or pay the second instalment. Page 23

Could I speak to the prodigal son?



Taking cover

People who buy a standard holiday insurance package may find that the cover is more limited than they thought. This is especially true for non-standard luggage and jewellery, or losses suffered while travelling. Margaret Dickinson received only a quarter of her claim for items stolen from her holiday villa. Late-bookers, or those who apply on holiday brochure forms, are particularly vulnerable, as policy details may not arrive until too late. Page 21



Home comfort

Homebuyers can now take advantage of a number of fixed rate mortgage offers. Lenders are hoping for a surge in confidence in the housing market following the election. Page 24

Dealing offer

Readers of The Times can sell any privatisation shares for £10. Up to four family members can sell shares in the same company for one fee. Families pay £2 per extra holding. Page 22



Luck of the draw

A tax-defaulter made bankrupt by the Inland Revenue had his premium bonds retained by the trustee. But he does not want a big win at the moment as it would go to the taxman. Page 23

Names put further pressure on Lloyd's

BY JONATHAN PRYNN

A SECOND attempt to block Lloyd's seizing names' assets will be launched next week following Thursday's High Court decision to uphold Lloyd's legal right to draw down on names' deposits to pay insurance policy claims.

Names across the country were bracing themselves this weekend for the launch of proceedings after Easter to draw down on deposits to fund a £200 million round of cash calls made earlier this year.

More than 800 names, with "tens of millions of pounds" of assets at risk, sought an injunction earlier this month in the Commercial Court to block the move.

The outcome of the action means that hundreds of names could be forced to turn to the Lloyd's hardship committee, chaired by Dr Mary Archer, to avoid bankruptcy.

However, the chairman of the biggest action group of names, which represents members of the loss-making Gooda Walker syndicates, yesterday confirmed that new proceedings were imminent.

THE POUND

US dollar 1.7470 (-0.0148)
German mark 2.9131 (-0.0053)
Exchange index 91.6 (-0.3)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 share 2059.2 (+6.2)
FT-SE 100 2638.6 (-1.6)
New York Dow Jones 3365.50 (+12.74)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave 17581 (-3.79)
* Thursday's close except Japan

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Michael Freeman application was based, although naturally our legal advisers have been studying those proceedings closely and the disclosures forced out by Michael Freeman's initiative will be fully taken into account where relevant.



Archer: hopes for future

Hundreds of investors face ruin

BY OUR CITY STAFF

RUINED Lloyd's names from Cornwall to Scotland are spending Easter considering their dwindling options after the failure of Thursday of a court action to stop Lloyd's calling in their assets.

Unlike almost any other form of investment, names at Lloyd's can lose more than they have put up because of the principle of unlimited liability. Some now face losses on their Lloyd's underwriting of three or four times their net worth.

Lloyd's has the right, upheld in court, to take all their assets, including property, and any estate after death.

Diana Herford, who owns a small country hotel in Gloucestershire with her husband, Bill, joined Lloyd's in 1976 to help pay her children's school fees. She had been told by her agent and accepted that in a bad year she could make a loss of up to 10 per cent.

Over her first 15 years as a name, she did little better than break even but received a cheque for £30,000 in her best year.

However, last year she discovered she had been placed on some of the most disastrous syndicates at Lloyd's, where losses are upwards of 200 per cent. She now faces total demands from her agent for more than £500,000.

She said: "Everything we have built up and worked for over the past 20 years is just going to go down the chute. It's absolutely heartbreaking."

Walker syndicates are expected to announce a combined loss of about £200 million when their 1991 results are reported this summer. They were all involved in the so-called LMX spiral, which insured other Lloyd's syndicates. The losses for syndicate 298 alone are forecast to reach an average of £42,000 a head for the 1989 year of account.

The loss for the Lloyd's market as a whole will be well in excess of £1.5 billion. More pessimistic forecasters are now talking of up to £2 billion.

It is almost certain that hundreds of names, who joined Lloyd's in the knowledge that they faced unlimited liability, will be effectively bankrupted by their Lloyd's losses.

When all their deposit funds have been called down, Lloyd's is legally entitled to issue a writ against names to pursue any remaining assets, including any property owned by the names.

Some names will apply to the hardship committee for a phased schedule of payment of their debts. However, a number of names contacted yesterday by The Times said they had no faith in the committee.

One Gooda Walker name described the committee as "thoroughly ruthless" and "no more than a debt-collecting agency". An application to the committee involves a detailed examination of the financial affairs of the name's spouse, and the name said his wife was not prepared to submit herself to that.

Another name said he would prefer to be made bankrupt "to be shot of Lloyd's". He added: "Once the hardship committee get their claws into you, they are there for life."

Successful applicants to the committee are expected to reduce their living expenses and move to more modest accommodation until they have fully discharged their debts to Lloyd's. On the death of the name, remaining assets are used to repay any outstanding debts.

Dr Archer was lecturing at Harvard University and unavailable for comment yesterday.

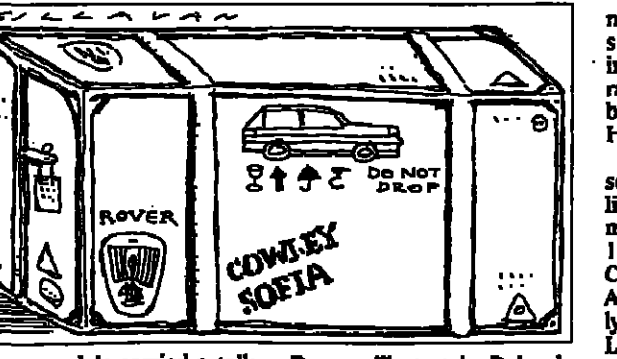
However, in an interview published last year, she said: "I would like to think that it will, one day, be possible to remove the worst risks from underwriting at Lloyd's and with them the present need for a hardship committee."

joined Lloyd's in 1966, giving him little time to build up reserves before the losses from half a dozen syndicates began pouring in.

He is now expecting his losses for the 1988-90 period to amount to almost £1 million, four times the size of his life savings and inheritance. Of his £175,000 deposit with Lloyd's, only £65,000 remains after drawdowns and cash calls, and with the failure of the Freeman legal action, Mr Platts expects this to be called in after Easter. The house is owned by his wife and is, therefore, out of Lloyd's reach. He is not sure what action Lloyd's will take after the deposit is gone as "there is nothing more for them to get".

Mr Platts, who resigned from Lloyd's last year, was following in the footsteps of his grandfather and two uncles when he became a name. "I feel an absolute fool to have even got involved in the thing," he said.

Richard Platts, 58, a retired economics lecturer, no use for the defunct Maestro assembly lines after it introduces next year a mid-range model, the Synchro, being developed jointly with Honda.



Rover has specialised in selling unwanted assembly lines. The Morris Oxford, made at Cowley from 1948 to 1959, is manufactured in Calcutta as the Hindustan Ambassador, which, ironically, is being re-imported by a London company, for sale here soon. The Morris Minor is made in Sri Lanka, and India manufactures the Rover SD1. The Mini is produced under licence in South America, and the Mini Moke is made in Portugal.

Apart from the Bulgarian deal, Rover is negotiating to have Montego saloons, also due to be phased out from Cowley next year, made in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The company is already supplying about £50 million worth of Montegos to Siberia.

The deal represents a coup for Rover, which would have



Easter cheer: Brian Cardy with a range of Terry's and Chocometz products

French exports boost Terry's

BY PHILIP PANGALOS

TERRY'S Group, the chocolate and confectionery arm of United Biscuits, is enjoying the sweet taste of success after its move into the French market with the acquisition of Chocometz in May 1990.

France was a tough market to crack, but the purchase of Chocometz, a family-owned specialist chocolatier, chocolate liqueurs and Easter eggs maker, has enabled Terry's to sell its products in France. Chocometz, which is based in Metz, north-eastern France, was Terry's first continental European acquisition and was purchased for £5.4 million.

Since the acquisition, Terry's and Chocometz have both seen sales surge through the use of each other's marketing and distribution networks and methods.

Terry's exports to France were up 400 per cent in 1991, and the group will be pushing selected products in the future. Terry's Chocolate Orange is earmarked as one

of the most appropriate products to be marketed in France.

Brian Cardy, the managing director of Terry's Group, said the acquisition of Chocometz had been an enormous success.

"We acquired Chocometz in order to get a position in the French market. It's gone very well indeed. Both markets seem to benefit from the cross-fertilisation of ideas," he said.

Chocometz's upmarket chocolate products range from Piper-Heidsieck champagne bottles, which are filled

Thorn ready for big sale

BY CAROL LEONARD

COLIN Southgate, the chairman of Thorn EM1, has admitted publicly, for the first time, that all of the £3 billion conglomerate's businesses are for sale, other than music and rental, the two he now regards as core activities.

In an interview with The Times, he said that those businesses, primarily security, defence and Thorn's original lighting division, would be for sale at the right price. Mr Southgate said: "I'm not out there actively trying to sell them, but if someone comes along and wants to buy them it's a negotiable position."

He said the reason for wanting to dispose of these activities was because they were not "world class businesses". The lighting business was "arguably number one in Europe; it can run quite happily as a European business".

"We do not keep them short of money, we manage them hard," he said. "They are growing and we are protecting them. Some are not as strong managerially as we would like, particularly one of them — the security business. We need to work on that and I hope we have improved it."

Mr Southgate said Thorn's music business, which incorporates the Virgin record label, was "totally global". He denied that he was under pressure from City institutions to demerge the two core businesses. "Other people are certainly thinking about it for me, but the only reason for doing it is if the value of the separate bits would be greater than the value of them as a whole."

In seven years, when Mr Southgate's retirement age of 60, he predicted that the bulk of earnings will come from music and rentals. "In the City, it is seen as a £450 million to £500 million business, several years out."

Mr Southgate added that Thorn might develop a third core activity in the media, though not newspapers. "Maybe television programming is something we can do." Thorn EM1 owns 58 per cent of Thames Television.

Profile, page 19

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City investors turn their attention to UK equities

BY PHILIP FANGALOS

A GROWING number of professional City investors intend to increase their holdings of United Kingdom equities, according to a post-election Gallup survey of fund managers for Smith New Court, the securities house.

The survey, which was conducted on Monday and Tuesday, shows that there has been a major shift in fund managers' asset allocation policy following the surprise general election result.

A balance of 49 per cent of managers now intend to increase their holdings of United Kingdom equities, compared with 15 per cent in March. This is the highest level registered since the end

of 1990. Respondents are still attracted by European and Japanese equities, although they are less keen than earlier this year. By contrast, fund managers have taken a negative stance towards American shares since last September.

Some sceptics have their doubts about the monthly survey's findings, especially on overseas asset allocation policy, particularly when noting that only last November, about 46 per cent of respondents said they intended to increase their holdings of Japanese equities, while 16 per cent planned to decrease their holdings of American equities. Since then, the Japanese equity market has dived, while American shares have surged to record highs.

Fund managers have become more confident about the outlook for the United Kingdom equity market. Ninety per cent of managers are bullish about the FT-SE on a 12-month view, up from 75 per cent in March. About 73 per cent are bullish about prospects for European equities over this period, compared with 44 per cent for Japan. Only 27 per cent are optimistic on a one-year view for America.

Andrew Milligan, UK economist at Smith New Court, said: "Fund managers are worried when looking at valuations in the United States and are unsure about the market. Because the Japanese market has fallen so far, now may be a reasonable buying opportunity."

Fund managers also plan to raise their holdings of conventional United Kingdom gilts, although holdings of index-linked gilts will continue to be run down. The balance of institutions intending to reduce cash holdings has reached 54 per cent, the highest since March last year.



Still at large: Carlo De Benedetti's appeal procedure could drag on for years

De Benedetti to appeal

BY WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU, EUROPEAN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

CARLO De Benedetti, the Italian financier convicted for his involvement in the Banco Ambrosiano fraud ten years ago, declared yesterday that his conscience "is totally clear".

De Benedetti, aged 57, faces six years and four months in jail if the conviction is upheld by Italy's Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. He pledged he would fight to prove his innocence. Meanwhile, he continues at the helm of Olivetti, the computer company and the heart of his industrial empire.

He told a news conference in Milan yesterday that the verdict was "incomprehensible". "Looking back," he said, "there is nothing I would not do again." He conceded, however, that he regretted having accepted the deputy chairmanship of Banco Ambrosiano in November 1981.

De Benedetti has always insisted that he was not kept fully informed of the bank's activities by Roberto Calvi, the chairman at the time. Signor Calvi, nicknamed "God's banker" for his close association with the Vatican, was found hanging beneath

London's Blackfriars Bridge in June 1982. De Benedetti, one of 33 people convicted in the Ambrosiano fraud trial, insisted that neither he nor any of his companies had gained from the bank's collapse, which came several months after his resignation in January 1982.

He will remain in his dual role as chairman and managing director. He can do so because of Italy's legal system, which keeps people convicted of fraud out of jail until the appeal process is exhausted. In De Benedetti's case, this could take a few years.

For Olivetti and the reputation of Italy's industry, De Benedetti's sentence could not have come at a worse moment. Italy is in constitutional turmoil after the inconclusive outcome of the recent general election, and the business elite has been badly shaken in the past few years, as profits have suffered sharp declines.

De Benedetti took over the management of his company last November to see through painful restructuring, including 7,000 job cuts and an overhaul of divisional struc-

ture. Last year, the company made its first loss, of 200 billion lire (£132 million). It has said it hopes to break even this year, before returning to profitability in 1993.

Olivetti's insistence that the sentence has no operational implications calmed nerves at Milan's stock exchange, where shares in Olivetti and Compagnie Industriali Riunite (CIR), De Benedetti's main industrial holding group, fell sharply on Thursday after the conviction.

Olivetti shares opened L.45 higher yesterday morning at L.2,650. CIR was up L.25 at L.1,542.

O&Y rating suspended by credit agency

FROM PHILIP ROBINSON IN NEW YORK

MORE problems developed yesterday over cash-hit Olympia & York Developments, the Canary Wharf developer, as one leading Canadian credit rating agency suspended its rating on all O&Y's public debt issues.

The Canadian Bond Rating Service (CBRS) said interest payments on O&Y publicly held debt can no longer be assured after the group's default on a \$62 million interest payment to bondholders of Tower B of the World Financial Centre this week.

Mr Chhor Koo, CBRS managing director, said: "Although no technical default has been declared on Tower B bond, we felt we could not give anyone a false sense of security."

He said that failure to make the interest payment despite Tower B being fully occupied and rent-producing, indicated that payments were now being made at the whim of the owners, the Reichmann brothers who control O&Y.

CBRS, which has declined to rate half O&Y's public bond issues because it felt there was insufficient financial information, has now placed a C\$50 million (£24 million) 10.8 per cent bond on credit watch with negative implications.

"CBRS is satisfied with the quality of the property, the tenant and the cash flow securing the issue, but it cannot be assured interest payments to secured bondholders will continue uninterrupted," it said. O&Y is talking to almost 100 bankers about restructuring its debts.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

MGN aims to relist shares next month

MIRROR Group Newspapers hopes to relist its shares at the end of next month, after publishing audited figures for 1991. The group wrote to shareholders yesterday and will send out its figures next month in a detailed circular. It is expected that these will include heavy provisions against the fraud carried out by Robert Maxwell in the company and its pension fund. MGN has guaranteed to fund the pensions of all its employees and pensioners, despite losses of up to £350 million.

Publication of MGN's figures will clear the way for the sale of the 54.8 per cent stake in the group controlled by National Westminster, Midland, Lloyds and Goldman Sachs. The shares are being held as collateral on loans to Mr Maxwell's private companies. MGN's shares were suspended at 125p after Mr Maxwell's death last year.

US home starts rise

CONSTRUCTION of new homes and apartments in America rose last month for the fourth consecutive month, although permits for future building dropped. The Commerce Department said starts rose 6.4 per cent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.365 million homes, the highest in more than two years. Starts were 48.7 per cent higher than the seasonally adjusted annual rate of a year earlier. However, applications for building permits fell 6.5 per cent, a sign that the building rate will ease. The department revised February starts to show an increase of 8.7 per cent instead of the 9.6 per cent previously reported.

Faupel gives warning

FAUPEL Trading Group, the Unlisted Securities Market Chinese textiles importer, gave a warning of a provision of up to £490,000 on New World Electronic Products. Last June, Faupel acquired a 19.6 per cent of New World, a Liverpool supplier of infrared security equipment and related products. The company subsequently issued a loan of £100,000 and a finance facility of £150,000. However, a receiver has now been appointed at New World. Faupel will make the provision in its results for the year to end-March 1992, in June. Beeson Gregory, Faupel's broker, is looking for full-year, pre-tax profits of £1.3 million (£1.12 million).

Meeting postponed

CLUB Méditerranée, the French leisure group, had to postpone an extraordinary general meeting yesterday because there were not enough shareholders present to constitute a quorum. The meeting, which was to have voted on the renewal of the authorisation given to the board to increase Club Med's capital by up to Fr150 million, will now be held on April 29, the same day as the company's ordinary general meeting.

DIY chains fight for Easter gifts

Spring is with us, the Tories are back, and the do-it-yourself trade is gearing up for a seasonal bonanza. Jon Ashworth reports that the big companies are looking forward to a bumper weekend for sales

FOR do-it-yourself chains and garden centres, there is nothing quite like Easter. Texas Homecare and B&Q, Britain's two biggest DIY stores, are battling it out with their rivals this weekend for a slice of the most profitable four days of the year.

Now is the time for spring-cleaning, as painting the house, for digging the garden and mowing the lawn. DIY stores believe the election result will encourage consumers to start spending again; they expect their best Easter weekend.

Stores are likely to sell more wallpaper and paint than anything else over the weekend, with garden items close behind. Lawnmowers, bedding plants and growing bags will be in demand.

The DIY firms and garden centres can expect to do a third of their business for the year in the next six weeks. A rush to beat the rise in VAT boosted sales last Easter, but store owners are confident they will do even better this year.

Texas Homecare is Britain's second-biggest DIY specialist after B&Q, with a 9 per cent share of the market. It expects up to 3 million people at its 230 stores by the time doors close at 8 pm on Monday. Customers will buy goods worth £60 million, spending an average of £20 each. Texas will sell 10,000 lawnmowers, 250,000 rolls of wallpaper and more than a million litres of paint.

The company, which employs 12,000 people, claims to sell more garden furniture and barbecues than any of its rivals and has cut prices to boost sales. "We expect the busiest Sunday of the year," said Ron Trenter, chairman and chief executive. For all the millions spent

on advertising, the success of the Easter weekend comes down to the weather. "Ideally, it will be a bit cold, without too much rain," Mr Trenter said. Torrential rain and perfect sunshine are both bad; snow is unthinkable.

B&Q leads the DIY field with 285 stores, 15,000 employees and a 13 per cent market share. The company has spent £5 million distributing its colour catalogue to 15 million homes.

"It is the first time we have done something on this scale," said Bill Whiting, marketing director. The group has been stocking up. If all goes well, customers will walk away with 750,000 metres of timber, 400,000 paint brushes and 20,000 square metres of sandpaper.

Also helping for a good turnout is Do It All, Britain's third-largest chain, which was formed when Boots and WH Smith merged their DIY businesses nearly two years ago. Do It All is strongest in the north-west and south-east of England and has been running a massive advertising campaign.

Stephen Russell, managing director, said all the signs pointed to a successful weekend. The 5th largest unit trust company in the industry has a reputation for providing consistent long term investment performance, a fast and efficient service and a friendly client information line. Ring 071 382 3800 to order your PEP Planner and application form or complete and return the coupon NOW.

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Notice is hereby given that the 178th Annual General Meeting of the Members of the Society will be held at the Head Office, 15 Dalkeith Road, Edinburgh, on Tuesday, 12th May 1992 at 2.30pm for the following purposes:

To consider the Accounts and Balance Sheets for the year ended 31 December 1991 and the Reports of the Directors and Auditors.

To elect Directors

To appoint Auditors

To pass, if thought fit, the following Resolution recommended to the Members by the Directors:

"That the remuneration of the Auditors for the current year be fixed by the Directors of the Society."

To transact any other ordinary business proper to an Annual General Meeting.

Forms of Proxy for the use of Members of the Society who are unable to be present at the Meeting, but who may wish to vote thereat, may be obtained on application to the undersigned. To be effective Proxies must reach the Society's Head Office not less than two clear working days before the time for holding the Meeting. A Proxy need not be a member of the Society.

M D ROSS
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BUSINESS PROFILE: Colin Southgate

Music man tunes into the right wavelength

The chairman of Thorn EMI tells Carol Leonard that he has brought the jewel in the crown back to glory

Colin Southgate, the chairman of Thorn EMI, a conglomerate worth more than £3 billion and, after its purchase of Richard Branson's Virgin label for £560 million, one of the biggest record companies in the world, is not listed in *Who's Who*.

Southgate claims he was sent a form by its publisher, but that it went straight into his "shredding" tray. "I didn't fill it in because it's a waste of bloody time... I'm not here to make things useful," he snaps. "It's just not the sort of thing that has ever really interested me. And I would rarely use it to find out about other people. I would ring someone I know who knows them instead." He always tackles problems head on.

As the interview begins, Southgate has a choice of half a dozen seating positions. He chooses the one furthest away. From such a distance he looks younger than his 53 years. He is 6ft 4in tall, has a full head of grey hair — "I can't remember a time when I wasn't grey" — a long, Roman nose, wears large spectacles and a bright tie. He exudes an instant air of self-confidence, is not naturally given to self-doubt and is far better at giving orders than receiving them.

As a day pupil at City of London School, he was rebellious. "I was not too happy with the conventions of public school, the rules and regulations. They expected you always to do something a certain way." Most of the time Southgate did not. "I was not a loner, I suppose I was one of the lads, but I'm also pretty independent. I do not need to be part of a crowd."

The ease with which he can stand alone explains his management style. "I might be bossy," he says reluctantly. "My views are quite strong, but I definitely don't think I'm a bully. A bully doesn't listen and is domineering and pushy. I'm not like that, although I might be slightly assertive." That assertiveness can come close to

aggression and can occasionally spill over into temper. "The reason I'm not a very stressed person is because I can get rid of it by occasionally shouting and using words that I should not use," he says. "Then it all disappears. My wife tells me that I have a certain look. I have a glare I think."

That withering glare, coupled with a few well-chosen words, reduced a female Thai Air employee to tears, when his baggage had been lost in transit. "Yes, I felt awful then," he says.

Southgate has a desire to lead, to always be in control. He admits that he finds his four non-executive directorships — the Bank of England, Lucas, PowerGen and the Prudential — frustrating. "It gives you an opportunity to look at other businesses and make a contribution to their thinking, but it is frustrating for someone, like myself, who would like to get their grubby hands on doing things." He also admits that he is given to instant likes and dislikes, as one unfortunate American business associate once discovered.

"He was bone bloody ignorant about the international market place, as most Americans are. He made several crass comments, he didn't even know where Lyons was and within five minutes of him walking into the room I was practically at his throat. I do not like people running down my business out of bone bloody ignorance, it really, really annoys me."

Southgate was born into a middle-class family in New Malden, Surrey, and then moved to Epsom. His father was the second and last generation to run a family fruit and vegetable business in Covent Garden. He began his career as an "actuarial slave" with NPI, he had a good mathematical brain, an eye for detail — "I can get down to nitty-gritty detail. I am pretty fussy about certain things. I have been known to ask why we are missing a light bulb in the reception area" — but he hated the job. He stuck it for three years, then left and went into computing, spending the next ten years with ICL. It was there that he met and married his wife, Sally, the chairman's daughter. They have four children. Simon, aged 27, a financial PR executive, Nick, 25, a BBC researcher — "He



In harmony: Colin Southgate with Sally, his wife. She was the chairman's daughter

is an argumentative sod, we argue a lot and sometimes worry the others, but I think we get on all right. He is my conscience" — Emma, 21, a medical student, and Becca, 19.

"I don't think I started really working — I certainly wasn't studious at school — until I went into computing," says Southgate. "Since then I have enjoyed every single day of my working life." ICT led to ICL and in 1970 he launched his own firm, Software Sciences. He has since sold it three times, "each time for more money. It has made me financially independent". BOC bought it in 1982, and in July 1991, Southgate sold it again, this time to its management, but without him being on board. "They paid a huge amount for it, bless their little hearts." In business he is not a sentimental man. He almost always keeps his emotions under control. When his father died six

years ago, the news was broken to him while he was at work. "I just wanted to be left on my own. Tears flowed pretty quickly and then it was over." As for music, he says, "I do not get moved to tears but I can lose myself."

Eight months after the sale of his business to Thorn, Southgate went into what he now calls his "semi-retirement". It lasted 18 months and ended when he was doing so much consultancy work for Thorn that his accountant advised him to return to its payroll. He rejoined the group in 1983, ran its technology business, which contained his own software operation, and went on to the board when Peter Laister became chairman in 1984. He then represented both the defence and the electronics divisions, was made managing director in 1985, chief executive in 1987 and chairman in 1989.

"I do not look back... sometimes I cannot believe it," he says, unaware of any contradiction. "I was in the right place at the right time. I think I was lucky."

There are those who would say that when Southgate first became chairman, he was dwarfed by the job. To an objective observer, his chances of success or failure were evenly balanced. But he grew with the job, perhaps carried through by his unerring self-confidence. He mastered it, and proved his doubters wrong.

Sir Peter Walters, the former BP chairman and non-executive deputy chairman of Thorn, says, "He is the original self-made computer entrepreneur who found himself in a company much bigger than he had ever thought about, and who needed a few signposts along the way. Intellectually, he never had any problem. He never holds anything back. There's a sort of schoolboy element in him that loves the excitement of the world he now deals in." It is that schoolboy enthusiasm that makes him appear younger than his years.

Walters also says that Southgate is far from unsentimental when it comes to the music business. "He lights up when talking about the music side."

Southgate would agree. "I have saved the jewel in the crown and brought it back to its former glory. It's totally global, has a product that travels globally and gives a lot of pleasure to a lot of people. I think it is a wonderful business. The music business is not a champagne-swilling, cork-popping, hippy business, it is very professional. I found that out even before I joined Thorn's payroll. I went to some of their meetings and got on to a wavelength with their music people far faster than with the people running any other part of the business. They are more personable, more streetwise and have a fun element about them. I'm streetwise about business but not about music."

That perhaps explains why, when it came to negotiating the Virgin deal, which took 14 months, Southgate handled his side of the negotiations, while Branson's side was represented by a merchant banker. "Everyone goes about these things in his own way. I wouldn't say I have anything in common with Branson, but I get on fine with him. I think I get on well with most people. I'm quite easy to talk to. I'm quite a good listener. I'm quite a good person to confess to. If people tell me the truth I'm a softy, but if they do not confess to me I get angry. I get upset because I feel they do not trust me."

Esther Dye, a friend and former Software Sciences colleague, says, "Yes, trust means a lot to him. He is able to establish an immediate rapport with most people. He really is interested in what other people have to say, he expects a contribution from them, and in the company that means everybody from the tea lady to the directors. It also means that he can be a bit forbidding because he is testing and challenging all the time. You have to stand your corner — he is very determined. Can't do is not in his vocabulary. He refuses to conform, which can be both a weakness and a strength."

Financial independence has given the Southgates an enviable lifestyle. Home is a 16th century farmhouse in Berkshire. Holidays are spent at a five-bedroomed house in the south of France. Weekday nights are often spent at a company-owned house off Park Lane, Mayfair. "I say there are two nights a week and use it for entertaining. It means you can have better wine much cheaper. I take it all quite seriously. I'm fussy. I pick the menu and all the wines. I'm a good organiser — I have the timing worked out like a military exercise." Southgate insists that he is not extravagant. "I am not at all materialistic. I would not buy myself a £500 bottle of wine. I would rather buy myself a £100 bottle of wine and keep it for ten years until it is worth £500 and then drink it." Wealth is, as always, relative.

Nor is he a workaholic. "I very rarely take work home, it's a bit of an imposition to interrupt one's private life." But once at home, he can be moody and silent.

For someone who is not a workaholic and who has had so much financial success, it is difficult to see what motivates him now. "I'm driven by success, motivated by challenge. In fact I'm probably in need of one now. I still feel as if there is another job in me. I'm certainly not worn out or exhausted, or anything like that."

'I am fussy about certain things, I have been known to ask why we are missing a light bulb in the reception area'

WEEK ENDING Matthew Bond

All eyes trained on ever ready Hanson

THE first week of the fourth Tory term — or week zero as liberal-leaning optimists have dubbed it — has seen some curious pointers to the economic future.

Even before John Major had finished appointing his Currie-less cabinet, the business world was moving rapidly to come to terms with the new political order. In just a few hectic days Hanson sold Ever Ready batteries to the Americans, the Germans bought one of our biggest central heating boiler manufacturers and the Isle of Man announced it would be a running budget deficit. What did it all mean?

Taking the easiest first, we turn immediately to Douglas. When Donald Gelling, the Manx treasury minister, was drawing up plans for his budget, he was confidently looking forward to announcing a huge budget surplus thanks to the wealth-exporting power of John Smith's proposals.

But the best laid plans, not to mention campaigns... When the secretly commissioned P&O ferry fleet unexpectedly stayed in home waters last weekend, it was back to the cash flow projections for Mr Gelling. Not that Norman Lamont, the twenty-eight billion pound man, will be shedding many tears for his Manx counterpart. Mr Gelling's projected deficit for the forthcoming financial year is a mere £4.5 million. Plans to cover the shortfall are already advanced. Mr Gelling flies to Florida this weekend to persuade Nigel Mansell to move back.

Back home, a stumble in the apparently inexorable rise in people unemployed prompted a fresh outbreak of economic optimism. This feel-a-better factor was heightened by the news that Robert Bosch, the German industrial giant, was paying £80 million for Worcester Group, that Ralston Purina, an American company, was buying Ever Ready for £132 million, and that Hongkong



and Shanghai Bank was offering £3.1 billion for the Midland Bank.

There can be no sounder confirmation that the economy has turned the corner than seeing British owners, worn out by three years of downsides, calling it a day, just as overseas investors arrive to buy the upside. Caveat vendor, as they probably say somewhere.

However, when it comes to Hanson, any bewailing is normally on the other foot, with few able to claim they have got the better of the Lords Hanson and White. Sir Denis Henderson apart, the peerless peers' reputation for judging the moment makes the disposal of Ever Ready all the more interesting. Clearly the recovery is not going to be battery-powered. So what will drive Hanson forward?

The whole stock market, which spent the week testing its upper limits, has been trying to answer that one. There is no shortage of candidates, starting with the in-play Midland Bank, a business Hanson has already run its mainframe over, and finishing who knows where?

But Weekending believes Hanson is likely to stick with the contra-cyclical principle that has served it so well. Following its purchase of Beazer, Hanson is once

again casting its eyes over the construction sector. The week produced a remarkable litany of recessionary woes with the likes of John Mowlem, Tarmac, Taylor Woodrow and Higgs & Hill all making it abundantly clear why they are known as contracting companies.

With individual firms shrinking so fast, Hanson believes the time is right for one of the typically audacious moves for which it is famed. Whisper it quietly, but Hanson is preparing a bid for the entire construction sector. Advisers have been working overtime on the deal. After last week's results, they reckon a tender should secure the lot, with change left for two fish suppers and the bus ride home.

Given what is threatening to happen in Toronto, the change could also allow Hanson to mop up the world's property market. Since the secretive Olympia & York threw open its books, or at least the last lot it could find, to anxious bankers, the property market on both sides of the Atlantic has teetered on the brink. But with over £14 billion of loans at risk, any decision to pull the plug would see more than just the C&E washed down the plug-hole, as the bankers are all too aware.

Back in Britain, the financial plughole of unlimited liability beckons for many of the 600 Lloyd's names who lost their legal fight to prevent the insurance market drawing on their deposits to cover the now well chronicled losses. It was therefore an inauspicious moment for RW Sturge, the underwriting agency, to borrow an idea from American Express by offering its members up to £750 in cash for each new name they introduced to the market, with a further sum of up to £2,500 after the debutant's first year. A number of wealthy individuals have responded by offering friends considerably larger sums not to be introduced to Lloyd's.

French dockers strike over reforms

FROM REUTERS IN PARIS

UNION leaders representing most of France's 8,300 dockers have called for a strike in protest at government plans to reform the country's ports. The 48-hour walkout, beginning today, is the latest in a series of almost weekly strikes that began last October.

On Wednesday, the two-week-old cabinet of Pierre Bérégovoy, the prime minister, adopted a bill that would abolish the 1947 dock labour scheme, ending the special status of registered dockers.

After a meeting of representatives of all the dockers' unions, the communist-led CGT said: "This bill must be withdrawn or put on ice in order to allow national negotiations on the future of the country's naval, maritime and port sector."

Charles Josselin, the new secretary of state for maritime affairs, intends to pursue reforms almost unaltered from those of his predecessor, Jean-Yves Le Drian, who in six months failed to find common ground for talks with the CGT. The government wants to negotiate on a port-by-port basis, while the unions want a single series of nationwide talks.

Under the 1947 labour law, dockers are paid even when there is no work. M Josselin plans to make dockers salaried monthly.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Steve Miller, a senior executive at Olympia & York sat down and ordered smoked salmon and a glass of Chardonnay and began to unwind. That afternoon he had presented a \$19.4bn restructuring plan to 400 bankers. He was exhausted, but relieved.

Business — The Sunday Times tomorrow

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Sluggish trading ends three days of increase

Shares tumble in Tokyo

FROM JOANNA PITMAN
IN TOKYO

AFTER three consecutive days of modest advances, the Tokyo stock market took a tumble yesterday amid a generally bearish short-term outlook on the economy and a wave of profit-taking sell orders.

The Nikkei 225 average lost 379.07 points to close at 17,580.69 indicating that the overnight 12.74 point rise to another record of 3,366.50 on the Dow Jones industrial average in New York had little impact in Tokyo.

Yasuo Ueki, of Nikko Securities, said: "Today's decline was acceptable and within expectations." He pointed out that the sluggish sentiment in the bond market and the yen's decline to Y133 against the dollar also pulled down the market.

Brian Tobin, of SG Warburg Securities in Tokyo, said: "Investors have seen a good run in the market this week but with most overseas markets closed on Friday and Monday, activity has tapered off with a lot of foreigners choosing to remain out of the market."

Foreign buying has kept the Tokyo stock exchange afloat over the past year, and many Japanese institutional investors, who have been noticeably absent from the Tokyo market for months, are expressing interest in the equity investment plans of their foreign counterparts.

Index-linked arbitrage trading, which has been blamed for the recent volatility of the market, was again in evidence yesterday.

Since arbitrage trading became a feature of the Tokyo stock market in 1988, brokers, especially American securities houses, have been betting on the movements of the Nikkei average and find that in low volume trading they are able to push the Nikkei average up and down at will.

One foreign broker said: "This kind of easy money playing has distorted prices and created uncertainty, but there is certainly a lot of money to be made out of it." He estimated that half of the total of worldwide profits at



Sign language: floor traders sending hand signals in Tokyo yesterday

Salomon Brothers last year were made in Tokyo from arbitrage trading business.

While the Nikkei average shows all the signs of continuing along a roller-coaster path for some weeks, the government continues to express a determinedly sanguine outlook on the economy.

Takeshi Noda, director general of the government Economic Planning Agency yesterday said that the government's emergency economic measures, announced at the beginning of this month, would produce effects soon enough to boost the economy. "I believe the effects will be

seen gradually. It will not take as many as several months," he said.

There was a widespread feeling that interest rates had already fallen to their lowest level, which may help put an end to postponement of corporate investments and may encourage new borrowing, he added.

A Bank of Japan quarterly economic outlook released yesterday also sounded an optimistic note, reporting that the combined effect of recent successive rate cuts and fiscal stimulus will help Japan to realise its targeted economic growth figure of 3.5 per cent.

The report said: "Japan's economy still requires a considerable degree of adjustment, accompanying a further drop in production, which could be viewed as a transitional phase towards sustainable non-inflationary growth."

The Bank of Japan also forecast that the world economy would remain on a mild recovery track towards the second half of this year. Asian economies would post relatively high growth but the economies of western nations would record only mild growth, it said.

Wall Street was closed for the Good Friday holiday.

Investors tot up gains after helter-skelter ride

FUND managers and traders will take advantage of the Easter holidays to reckon up their profits and recharge their batteries in the wake of the stock market's helter-skelter performance of the past few weeks.

Share prices never go up in a straight line, according to pundits in the Square Mile. However, investors could be forgiven for thinking that someone had got it wrong, in view of events since the election. The City signalled its delight at the result the day after polling, pushing up the index 136 points and sending government securities soaring by 64 at the longer end.

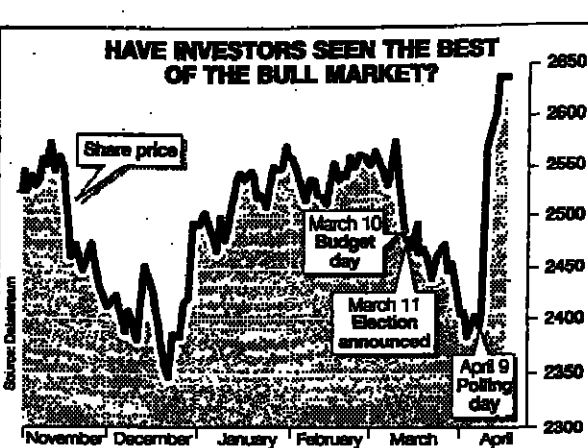
It was a breathtaking performance, all the more amazing when the sharp falls that had been occurring on other world markets, notably New York and Japan, are taken into account.

The FT-SE 100 index closed on Friday at 2,638.6, having come within six points of its all-time high of 2,679, achieved on September 2, 1991. The first signs that the market tide was ready to turn came on April 8, the day before polling. A few daring buyers came in for utilities and privatisation stocks after a small but telling swing towards the Conservatives in the opinion polls.

Since then, the equity market has risen by 245.4 points, or 10.2 per cent. Some analysts have pointed out that the market has merely experienced a correction, having seen much of the risk factor that has overhung it for the past six months suddenly discounted.

Admittedly, much buying has been directed at the top 100 companies and a few selected sectors. These include utilities, privatisation issues and potential recovery situations, such as stores and industrial companies, which have borne the brunt of recession. So far, there has been little evidence that buying has filtered through to second- and third-line companies.

Water companies, electricity distributors and power generators enjoyed the best performance. They suffered



hefty falls in the run-up to election day, after Labour renationalisation threats. Thames Water provided a typical example of subsequent rises. On the day before polling, the shares were trading around 329p. Hectic trading throughout the night saw the price reach 416p. It closed on Thursday night at 425p, a rise of 96p, or 29 per cent.

Power generators also enjoyed a new lease of life. National Power, trading at 190p on the eve of polling, closed

on Thursday at 218p, a rise of 28p, or 15 per cent. Similar sizeable gains have been made by Wessex Water (26 per cent), Northumbrian Water (25 per cent), North West Water (28 per cent), East Midlands (38 per cent) and Northern Electricity (39 per cent).

Observing the utility companies will be unable to sustain the pace for long and it looks as if we have seen the best of the gains. Most leading brokers, however, remain bullish on electricity and water companies. Much the same can be said of the rest of

Hyundai founder says firm is harassed

FROM REUTERS
IN SEOUL

THE founder of South Korea's Hyundai Group said yesterday the conglomerate could collapse this year if the government did not halt what he called its suppression.

Chung Ju-yong, now leader of the opposition National Unification Party (UNP), has complained that tax investigations and credit squeezes on the company he ran for more than 40 years constitute political harassment.

"The more the people's expectations for the UNP rise, the more (the government) will suppress Hyundai, and then Hyundai would collapse, perhaps before the presidential election," the retired tycoon said.

In the latest government crackdown on the Hyundai empire, tax authorities this month charged Hyundai Merchant Marine Co Ltd with evading millions of dollars in taxes from 1987 to 1991. The shipping firm was ordered to pay 27.1 billion won (\$19.7 million).

Government officials deny the investigations into the group have been politically motivated by President Roh Tae-woo's administration. Mr Chung, a long-time government critic, announced his retirement from business in January to form his own party to campaign against Mr Roh's government.

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Asset	100.00	100.00	10.00	Asset	100.00	100.00	10.00	Asset	100.00	100.00	10.00	Asset	100.00	100.00	10.00	Asset	100.00	100.00	10.00	Asset	100.00	100.00	10.00	Asset	100.00	100.00	10.00
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READERS of *The Times* can sell any privatisation shares for £10 per deal with up to four members in the same family with shares in the same company dealing for one fee.

The postal dealing service is offered by Hambro Clearing, a subsidiary of Hambros plc. The deals can be offered at this price because large numbers of sell orders for the same share are batched together and sold for the best price. This can cause a small delay, but all shares will be sold on the day after receipt of the stock.

Investors are then sent a post-dated cheque for the amount the sale realised, less the commission, together with a contract note detailing the price obtained. The cheque is dated for the next Stock Exchange account day when payment is due to the share seller.

The service is execution-only, which means that no advice is given and shareholders must sell all their stock in any one company.

The company estimates it can handle 5,000 deals a day through its Cardiff dealing centre, and its other offices can be brought on line to help out if demand warrants it. Families are charged an extra £2 for each additional shareholder.

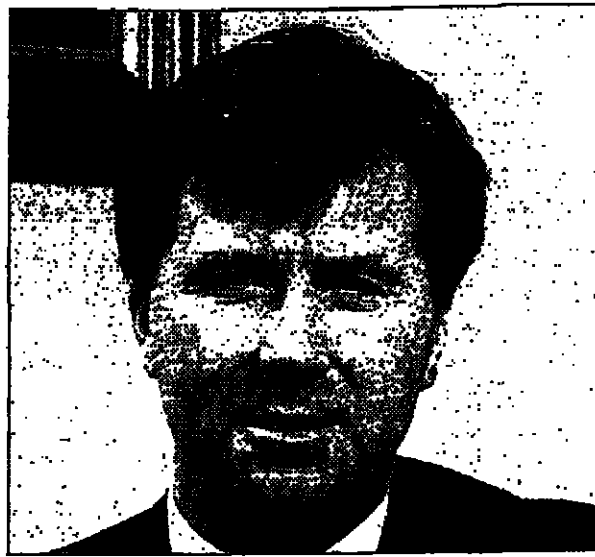
Conservative victory puts a shine back on the gilts market

By HELEN PRIDHAM

JUST as the equity market shot up after the Conservative election victory, so too did the gilts market. Having fallen about 5 per cent in the previous six weeks, it regained all this loss and more besides. The Bank of England used the opportunity to sell a further £5 billion of stock on the day after the election.

David Rosier, of Mercury Asset Management, said: "Gilts investors responded to the prospect that interest rates and inflation were more likely to continue downwards under a Conservative government. Both of these factors are good for gilts. Foreign buyers also gained confidence."

Whereas share prices are likely to continue to be volatile and the outlook for dividends is uncertain, investors who buy gilts now can lock into current interest rates and also be sure of a fixed capital return if they hold the stocks to maturity. In terms of security, few investments compare with gilts, which are issued by governments when they need to borrow money from private and institutional investors. The return on gilts reflects



Boost for gilts: David Rosier of Mercury Asset

current interest rate expectations. They are yielding up to 9.5 to 10 per cent at present.

For the private investor, there are three ways of buying gilts direct, or they can be bought through unit trusts.

The cheapest method is to buy newly issued stock direct from the Bank of England as there is no commission to pay. They can be bought by filling in a newspaper coupon when a new issue is offered for sale. The minimum stake is £1,000 nominal value.

Gilts are priced in nominal £100 lots but new issues rarely start off at a fixed price. Investors normally only pay a deposit initially. When the average price tendered by the institutions for the same issue has been worked out, this becomes the striking price and investors are then asked to pay the balance.

The problem with buying new issues, however, is that there may be none on offer when investors want them or they may not suit their requirements. The alternative is to buy an existing stock either through a broker or the National Savings Stock Register.

Buying through the register is simple and costs £4 for each £1,000 of stock bought. Up to £10,000 per day can be invested in any one stock. The application forms, obtained at post offices, should be sent to the Bonds and Stock Office in Blackpool. The issues that can be purchased through the register are listed in a booklet available at post offices. An up-to-date list can also be obtained from the Bonds and Stock Office. The half-yearly income payment dates are also listed.

Prices can be checked in newspapers. Anyone who pays more than 100p will suffer a capital loss on maturity. Apart from the cheapness of dealing, an advantage of buying gilts through the register is that interest is paid without tax deducted. However, it is possible to transfer

gilts bought via other routes to the register, if the stocks are listed, and holders can then enjoy the tax benefit.

Gilts can be sold before they reach maturity through the register. The proceeds should arrive within a week. The price before maturity is not fixed and varies with the market. No advice is given by the register on which gilts to buy and when to sell. Stockbrokers including the subsidiaries of banks can give this sort of advice. At NatWest, for example, NatWest Stockbrokers would be asked for advice. The minimum charge for a purchase would be £25.

Investors who would prefer someone else to make the investment decisions can also opt for a unit trust. Many of these unit trusts offer quarterly income payments, while Fidelity's Gilt & Fixed Income trust pays out monthly. Charges vary widely. Several companies have lower charges on their gilt funds because of the lower expenses. Fidelity's is one of the cheapest with no initial charge and 0.75 per cent annual charge.

Minimum investment normally starts at £500. However, the drawback of unit trusts is that while direct holdings of gilts are capital gains tax-free, the gains from a unit trust will be subject to tax if they exceed the annual allowance and they will not qualify for indexation. One company that has got round the indexation problem by investing at least 10 per cent of its fund outside the UK is Mercury. Recent developments have severely diminished the attractions of index-linked gilts. Victor Van Boven, of NatWest Stockbrokers, says: "Anyone who wants to hedge their bets would be better off with Index Linked National Savings Certificates, which give a guaranteed 4.5 per cent tax-free return on top of inflation."

BRIEFINGS

HAFNIA Prolific International is to launch the first China fund recognised by the Securities and Investments Board on April 28. The China Opportunities fund will invest only 10 per cent directly in China initially and will look to China-orientated companies in well established markets, such as Hong Kong, for the rest. The fund is one of five being launched, which will be listed on the Dublin Stock Exchange. The others are American, European Growth, Japan Growth and Asia Pacific, excluding Japan. There is an investment minimum of £1,500. There is a 2 per cent charge on the China fund, although this is halved until May 19. The other funds have a charge of 1 per cent and single pricing will operate on the funds. The annual charge is 1.25 per cent. Last week, Barclays and GT launched similar funds to take advantage of the opening of the Chinese market to outsiders.

Baillie Gifford has launched a bond unit trust that will invest in longer term corporate and public authority bonds, mainly in the UK and European Community, and will also have a significant gilt holding. The gross yield is expected to be 8.5 per cent. The front end charge is 5 per cent and the annual management fee is 0.4 per cent. The minimum investment is £5,000.

NatWest has beefed up its telephone banking service. Customers can now set up bill payments, inter-account transfers and requests for balances by a local rate call.

The Inland Revenue has published a leaflet for people going abroad to work. IR58 deals with the rules for deciding a person's residence status for tax purposes and the tax position of someone who works abroad but is treated as resident and ordinarily resident in the UK. It is called *Going to Work Abroad*.

Age Concern's benefits guide, *Your Rights 1992-93*, will be published on Thursday. The book, which costs £2.50, is sorely needed. The charity says that department of social security figures show that 21 per cent of pensioners entitled to income support do not claim.

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THE VIEW FROM SAVE & PROSPER

UK market buoyed by unexpected Conservative victory... US interest rates cut again...
Tokyo market manages a modest recovery... South East Asian markets remain attractive...
The change of French Prime Minister meets with broad approval.

UNITED KINGDOM

Surprise Conservative victory boosts equities and sterling.

■ The market was not expecting a Conservative victory, therefore there is considerable potential for it to rise further.

■ Conservative victory should boost consumer confidence, improve market sentiment and encourage further international investment. We, however, do not expect any immediate easing in interest rates.

■ Despite the strong gains since the Election, which has taken the market close to its all-time high, it is still yielding just below 5% - historically a strong buy signal.

■ The 'Footsie' could reach 2,850 to 2,900 by September and test 3,000 by the year end - a gain from here of 14%.

UNITED STATES

Wall Street hits all-time high.

■ Continued weakness in Japan pushed Wall Street lower until the Federal Reserve unexpectedly cut interest rates by 1%, which boosted the Dow-Jones Index to a record 3,300.

■ The economy continues to improve and consumer confidence in February showed the largest rise in a year. Mortgage applications were up 30% year on year in February, the strongest for 2 years.

■ At its current level, the stock market will want to see signs of earnings recovery before advancing further. We believe company earnings could be better than current expectations.

JAPAN

Market bounces back from the brink.

■ Contrary to our expectations the Japanese stock market continued to fall, even despite a 0.75% cut in interest rates to 3.0%.

■ The Nikkei Dow dropped below 17,000, a fall of over 25% since January 1992, before bouncing back on and after 10th April.

■ The market is cheap at its current level on historical and technical grounds and we remain confident that when the turn comes it will be sharp. Maybe 10th April did mark the turn but sentiment remains extremely negative, and the market cannot make further advances unless this improves.

■ The rate of decline in company earnings has now stabilised, and 12 months hence the recovery in earnings should be marked.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

Markets continue to offer attractive returns.

■ South East Asian markets have fallen on the back of the sharp falls in Japan.

■ Despite falls in the Hong Kong market, "Red Chips" (companies with exposure to China) continue to be strong performers.

■ Thai market continues to perform well on falling interest rates and better political stability is expected when a new Prime Minister is appointed.

■ The region's markets remain cheap in price/earnings terms and we expect the recent strong performance to continue through 1993.

EUROPE

Sentiment continues to improve.

■ The resignation of Mme Cresson and the appointment of M. Bérégovoy as French Prime Minister has been greeted with approval by the markets.

■ Company results across Europe have been in line with, or slightly better than, expectations, helping to boost investor sentiment.

■ German inflation at 4.7% for March is now expected to have peaked. Cuts in interest rates should occur during the third quarter of 1992, which would be very positive for all Europe including the UK.

■ Portugal has entered the European Exchange Rate Mechanism and simultaneously cut interest rates.

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UNITED STATES

United States Growth Fund for its exposure to cyclical stocks which should benefit from recovery from recession.

JAPAN

Japan Growth Fund for a broad spread of larger companies.

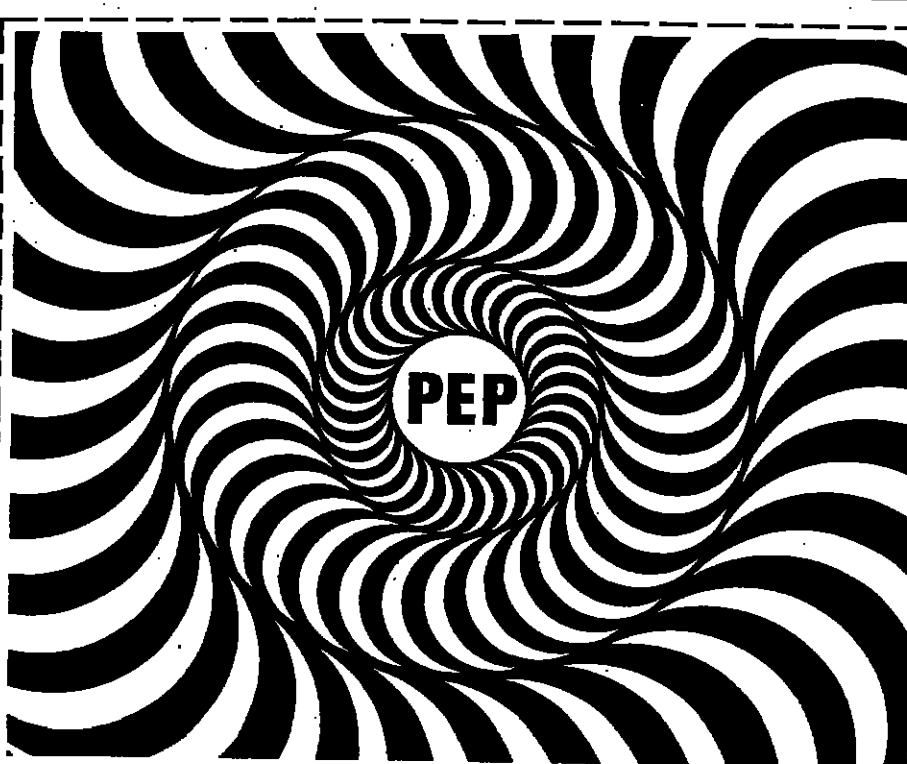
SOUTH EAST ASIA

Eastern Discovery Fund and **South East Asia Growth Fund** for the region's long-term growth potential.

EUROPE

European Growth Fund for its high weighting in large European companies.

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Finding an unwanted bond with taxman

BY LINDSAY COOK
MONEY EDITOR

ROBERT Chisnall has 10,000 premium bonds, but he does not want to win a big prize yet. If he does, the Inland Revenue will carry it off.

Mr Chisnall, a demolition contractor from Clacton, Essex, was made bankrupt in 1988 when the Revenue demanded £67,000 in tax. He could not pay. Last year, his bankruptcy was discharged, but his 10,000 premium bonds were retained by the trustee until his creditors are paid.

That means the Revenue will take any prize he wins in the meantime. If one of his bonds were to win the jackpot he would receive the surplus but a £50,000 prize would go to the Revenue after the costs of the bankruptcy were deducted. Indeed, it may have benefited already without Mr Chisnall's knowledge.

He said: "I still have the certificates, but when I telephoned the bonds office in Blackpool, and quoted my bondholder's number, I was refused information about any prize that might have been paid out."

Mr Chisnall cannot understand why the trustee in bankruptcy, Brian Mills, of Booth, White, did not sell the bonds to pay £10,000 off the tax bill at the time of his bankruptcy. "I would like to find out how much the bonds have won since 1988 so that I know how much is still owed," he said. Until he has



STEFAN ROUSSEAU

Luck of the draw: Robert Chisnall who does not want to win a big prize from Ernie at the moment

paid off the full amount owed to the Revenue in 1988, his bankruptcy cannot be terminated. His discharge allows him to have a cheque account or become a company director but the money is still owed.

National Savings could not comment on his case, but said that if there had been any winnings from the bonds the trustee would have been informed. "This office tends to hear of the situation from the Official Receiver or the trustee. Effectively the holding becomes the property of the trustee."

The Inland Revenue said it was not directly holding any premium bonds and would not do so. "It is up to the trustee to take in assets and turn them into money. We are in line with any other creditors. The trustee could have cashed in the bonds. We would not influence his actions."

A spokesman for Mr Mills said: "A trustee, where he does not have a creditors' committee to guide him, has to talk to the creditors in general. If there are major

amount. If the jackpot were won Mr Chisnall would receive the surplus."

The Revenue petitioned for bankruptcy as a last resort, the official said. In 1991, it did so in 2,695 cases and applied for 577 winding up orders.

Before the bankruptcy, Mr Chisnall expected to get a letter most months telling him that he had won £50 or £100. Typically people with the maximum holding of bonds win on average every month.

This is in line with the average return on the bonds at 6.5 per cent, although the randomness of the selection procedure means that holders of large numbers of bonds can go for months without a win and those with only one bond can receive the jackpot.

Premium bonds are not transferable from one person to another and Mr Chisnall's holding could not be sold without knowing about it, National Savings said.

If a relative obtained power of attorney over a bondholder's affairs, the office would want to see the certificate and then would allow the person to act for the bondholder. Parents can buy or sell bonds for children until they are 16.

When a bondholder dies, the bonds remain in the draw for up to 12 months and after that are ineligible.

If they are left in a will, the bonds have to be cashed in and then reinvested if the recipient wishes to have the bequest as bonds.

Deadline approaches for power shareholders

BY LIZ DOLAN

SHAREHOLDERS in Scottish Power and Hydro-Electric have until next Friday, April 24, to decide whether to sell up or pay the 70p second instalment on the shares. After that date, they lose the option of cutting their losses and bailing out of what have proved, from the investment point of view, two of the least successful privatisations so far.

Shares in both companies start trading in second instalment form on April 27. Payment cheques should reach the registrars by April 29 to ensure that they have been cleared by May 5.

The shares, issued at 100p last June, have never again reached their respective opening prices of 123p (Hydro-Electric) and 118p (Scottish Power).

In the run-up to the election, Hydro fell to a low of 73p, and ScotPower 68p. On the announcement of a Conservative victory, the stock market value of Hydro increased by 18 per cent within a few hours. However, even after rises of that scale, shares in both companies are still selling at about the 100p issue price.

Mike Keohane, head of corporate communications at Hydro-Electric, said: "The shares were very finely priced. The investors' loss was the taxpayers' gain, and at least the opposition parties can't claim it was a giveaway."

Both companies say that many more shareholders have hung on to their shares than would normally be the

case after privatisation. Hydro-Electric is keen to get rid of as many as possible of its small shareholders. About 600,000 people in England and Wales each hold between 90 and 100 shares in the company.

Mr Keohane said: "It's a tremendous administrative burden and we'd very much like to see a reduction in numbers, though clearly we want all serious long-term investors to stick with it. There is always a conflict of interest between a government that wishes to broaden share ownership and a company that prefers long-term investors."

As a carrot for potential sellers, Hydro set up a cheap dealing service on March 9. The service initially attracted

2,000 sell orders, before the pre-election fall in the share price put a damper on things.

Mr Keohane is hoping a large number of people will take advantage of the offer next week, now that the shares have perked up.

The service is operated by the Royal Bank of Scotland in conjunction with Bell Lawrie White, the stockbroker, and runs until at least May 29. Up to six members of the same family can sell shares to a maximum value of £3,000 for a fee of £10. Most people who opted to receive vouchers to set against their electricity bills have already qualified for all the vouchers due to them.

People with 300, or fewer, shares in both companies received their total entitle-

ment, worth between £18 and £54, in December. Those who chose bonus shares will not qualify until June 30, 1994.

Scottish Power takes a more cautious view about encouraging shareholders to sell out. An official said: "We are wary of putting any extra pressure on the share price at the moment. We are waiting until after the second call is safely away. But we are planning our own cheap dealing service in the summer."

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(Magill Professor of
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Yours faithfully,
C. LAWRENSON,
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Yours faithfully,
RONALD RIGG,
Inez Cottage,
Whetthampstead,
Hertfordshire

From G. M. Anthony

Sir, Regarding Dr Timmins' letter (April 11) about Scottish Widows' 'mistake', am I alone in wondering why the mistakes are always in the banks' or institutions' favour?

Yours faithfully,
G. M. ANTHONY,
6 Old Rectory Close,
Emsworth, Hampshire.

□ Letters are welcomed, but *The Times* regrets it cannot give individual replies or advice. No legal responsibility can be accepted for advice or statements in these columns and independent professional advice should be sought.

However, my primary reason for writing is that I am anxious that your article is potentially misleading in that it might give the impression that NPI is unusual and different in the nature of commission that it pays.

On the contrary, NPI has a well-established policy of setting its commission rates so that they are roughly mid-market amongst the offices who have as their prime source of business the independent financial adviser's market.

Yours faithfully,
LAURIE M. EDMANS,
Assistant General Manager
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Portfolio

PLATINUM

There is no Portfolio Platinum game over the Easter holiday. It will resume with the weekly game on Tuesday

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1992	High	Low	Company	Price	Net	Yld	P/E
311	257	257	Abey PLC	311	+3	45	9.8
184	184	184	Abey PLC	184	+3	45	9.8
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184	184	184	Abey PLC	184	+3	45	9.8
184	184	184	Abey PLC	184	+3	45	9.8

Shares consolidate gains

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began April 6. Dealings end April 24. Settlement day April 27. Settlement day May 5. Forward margins are permitted on two previous business days. Prices recorded are at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1992 High Low Company Price Net Yld P/E

1992 High Low Company Price Net Yld P/E

1992 High Low Company Price Net Yld P/E

1992 High Low Company Price Net Yld P/E

1992 High Low Company Price Net Yld P/E

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100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
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Twickenham awaits Cornish invasion

Daunting test for much-changed Lancashire team

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

AMID the euphoria that now surrounds Cornwall's appearance in the ADT county championship final, and the difficulties that encumbered Lancashire's selection for the game at Twickenham today, it is easy to forget that, strictly in terms of ability, there should be little between the sides.

The county final exists on a warm wave of emotion, thanks to Cornwall, whose third final in four years this will be and who seem to bring with them the entire duchy. Were it not so, the game would be seen for what it should be: an occasion for players whose rugby is, by and large, played outside the top 20 of the Courage Clubs Championship and attracting some six or seven thousand to Twickenham.

But any sport should have room for the naked emotion that the Cornish bring with them. Instead of Twicken-

ham's rafters echoing to the occasional cry of encouragement, they will be rattled by the deep-throated roar of over 50,000 and jangle to the music of the Falmouth Marine Band. "I honestly believe that it could not be more inspirational playing in front of a home international crowd," Glyn Williams, the Cornwall captain, said.

"Rugby is what gets us noticed nationally. It is the big topic of conversation and players experience local fame by being waylaid in the streets for a chat about the final. County pride enabled us to pull off that amazing win last season."

That was the extra-time victory over Yorkshire, which gave Cornwall their second championship — the first having come in 1908. But while the black-and-gold horde have been moving steadily east against the tide of Easter holidaymakers,

Lancashire have been reshaping their XV after the withdrawal of 11 of the players who helped them to semi-final success against Hampshire last month.

Perhaps they should not have relied so heavily on Orrell in the first place. It is Orrell's first division match against Harlequins on Monday that has forced the issue. But it would have been more in keeping with the nature of the competition to have chosen players who do not receive the exposure the first division club game offers.

Nonetheless, they can call on players from second division clubs — which is more than Cornwall can — and the top of the third.

"Many of the players are new to top-flight rugby and we must guard against the danger of them freezing when confronted with such a vast crowd," Des Seabrook, the Lancashire and Orrell coach, said.

Lancashire, tradition apart — they have won the title 14 times, most recently in 1990 — have the additional incentive of a unique treble: their club have already won their county championship and their under-21 XV hopes to beat Surrey in the curtain-raiser to the senior final.



Talking tactics: Ruddock irons out technique with the front row, from left, Colclough, Jenkins and Buckett, and Jones at scrum half

Ruddock plots a rise without falls

BY GERALD DAVIES

TODAY at St Helens, Swansea will duel for the Heineken League championship, a fair indicator of consistency, with their West Wales neighbours from across the Loughor River, Llanelli. This, if you understand the canonicism of the "Jacks" and the "Sopsans", is the big one. For Mike Ruddock, though, it is just another challenge in a season full of them.

This season has seen a change at Swansea, under the coaching of Ruddock, their flanker from the mid-Eighties. There was a time recently when a superlative Swansea performance, of a kind which they alone in Wales were capable, served only to guarantee that the rest of the month could be written off. The best was inevitably followed by a period of inexplicable mediocrity.

Swansea? Oh, they blow hot and cold, consistent only in their inconsistency was the conclusion. You buy

your ticket and you take your chance.

This season it is only Llanelli, for one week, and Pontypool, for three, at the beginning of the year who have interrupted Swansea's role atop the first division. They have been in the leading two since November and from February have occupied the No. 1 slot. If this shows they have not had it all their own way, it also shows a unity of purpose. Those errant shumps in form seem to have evaporated.

If Swansea are putting into place the kind of support structure — youth development plans, sports science techniques, reorganised committees and so on — which makes for better planning and efficiency, their immediate success is put down to the return of Ruddock as coach.

How has he managed it? Even a rugby coach, it seems, cannot do without paperwork nowadays. This is where it began for him.

"Before the season

Swansea	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Llanelli	15	10	4	1	343	173	22
Pontypool	15	9	6	0	250	204	18
Cardiff	15	8	5	2	236	224	16
Newport	15	7	5	3	226	203	17
Newbridge	15	7	3	5	216	150	16
North	15	6	3	7	213	204	16
Scarff	15	6	2	7	227	196	14
Maesteg	15	5	1	14	131	481	1

started," Ruddock explains. "I asked the players to answer a simple questionnaire. Could they put down Swansea's strength and weaknesses. Could they suggest where things might improve. What should be Swansea's actual style of play? That kind of thing."

"It was important for them, especially for the senior players, to make their contribution. In that way we could achieve common ground, a strategy could be formed, and we could understand the problems on how we, together, were to attain our goals."

Ruddock had been away

from the club since he fractured his skull and three of his vertebrae in an accident as a linesman for the Electricity Board in 1985. He returned to Blaenau in Gwent, coached them for a couple of seasons before going to Cross Keys for another two. He then spent a year coaching Bective Rangers in Ireland, where his wife came from.

"I could easily have stayed in Dublin. But I have a strong affinity for Swansea and that was the reason I returned," he says. In his first year, he has succeeded beyond his imaginings.

What their consistent league position does not portray is that Swansea have played the kind of rugby which the grimey competitiveness of the league is meant to deny. They have scored 51 tries. Their rugby still has a refreshing tendency to adventure, which Ruddock encourages but emphasises it is the quality of judgment that ensures success.

Ruddock, nevertheless, carries the pressure of his task lightly. "People talk about the stress which accompanies a successful team. It is one I enjoy. I've got quality players at my disposal. And to see the likes of Gibbs, Clement, Tidy and Davies, for example, beaming after a particularly successful move gives a great uplift."

Failure has not been a stranger, either, this season. "When we lost to Pontypool and Bridgend, it forced me to sit back. But it was my job to set things right, to learn from the defeats, review our style and get things on the right track again."

The significant steps? "The players believe in themselves and as long as we take the right options, everything will be fine. The players know when and how to strike."

Today is another yardstick. Swansea have not beaten Llanelli in the last 11 outings. Ruddock, you can bet, will not consider 12.

Evans to coach Cardiff

BY GERALD DAVIES

CARDIFF are expected to announce next week that Alec Evans will be their coaching organiser from next season. He was assistant to Alan Jones, the coach of the Australian grand slam winning team of 1984.

Although Evans has been reported as saying from Brisbane that he is looking forward to taking up the appointment, no statement has yet emerged from Cardiff. This is the worst period in Cardiff history. Having suffered upheavals with the loss of their coach, Alan Phillips, and removed John Scott, their manager, as surplus to requirements, they have won only two of 13 matches this term and lie second from bottom in the Heineken League first division.

With the announcement by the International Rugby Football Board on Thursday that Terry Holmes, after playing rugby league for Bradford Northern, had been reinstated as an amateur, the former scrum half has made it clear that, if asked, he would like to rejoin Cardiff in a coaching capacity.

Barbarians bow to the leagues

BY DAVID HANDS

EVEN traditional Easter pursuits have been invaded by the ubiquitous leagues. The Barbarians may cut their attractive swathe through Wales today but more eyes may be on Swansea v Llanelli than on Cardiff, while post-ponements have given the West Country two first division fixtures.

Not that Gloucester or Bristol are in contention for honours but, were London Irish to leapfrog over Bristol, there would be great relief at Sunbury.

The greater league battle comes on Monday, when Harlequins entertain an Orrell side still stunned by a last-second defeat against Wasps last weekend. Mike White, the Wasps flanker, celebrates his 100th game against Leicester on Monday.

Orrell must win convincingly if they are to maintain their pursuit of Bath. They travel south tomorrow with Sean Gallagher restored to No. 8 and Chris Brierley standing by if Bob Kimmins cannot take his place in the second row.

Harlequins have responded by putting out their best

available team, which includes their international midfield and Brian Moore at hooker. Simon Dear makes his league debut at lock and David Pears moves to full back, with Paul Challinor at stand-off half.

The Barbarians field 11 internationals against Cardiff, including Toshiyuki Hayashi, of Japan, Glen Ennis, of Canada, and Kevin Swords, the lock who took over the leadership of the United States to such good effect during the World Cup.

By way of diversity, Treviso make their first visit to Bath: London Irish stage their twelfth under-21 festival to-day and tomorrow; and, on Monday, Saracens play an invitation XV in a match celebrating Laurence Smith's seven seasons with the club, which ended when the centre had a leg operation last year.

BARBARIANS v Cardiff: I Hunter (Northampton), A Sanger (French and Scottish), B Bailey (Wales), T Underwood (Leicester), G Stiel (Wales and Scottish), G Oliver (French and Scottish), M Llewellyn (Cardiff), C O'Connell (Northampton and English), T Hayashi (Oxford University and Japan), J Cassell (Saracens), K Swords (Canada), J Smith (United States), M Bayfield (Northampton and English), J Smith (Gloucester and Scottish), G Ennis (Canada and Scottish).

BT Compiled by David Hands

MATCH-BY-MATCH GUIDE

Courage Championship

First division

Bristol v Llanelli
Paul Hull returns to Bristol at full back but Blackmore (lock), Davis (scrum half) and Lloyd (wing) all face fitness tests. The Irish, still not clear of the relegation zone, are without George Hogg (wing) but retain Burns at centre.

Gloucester v Wasps

Gloucester are short of six regulars, four in the backs and two, including Ian Smith, the captain, in the pack. Stanley replaces Smith as flanker and leader against a Wasps side with Llewellyn at stand-off for the injured Davies and Childs restored to centre.

Heineken League

First division

Bridgend v Pontypool

Both clubs lose players to the under-21 international. Bridgend bringing How Lewis in at scrum half and giving Paul Jones a league debut on the wing. Leyton moves into the Pontypool centre and Gavin Jones plays on the left wing.

Newbridge v Maesteg

Lyn Phillips joins the Newbridge back row after the dismissal, on Tuesday, of Roberts and with Gibbs unavailable Maesteg, bottom of the table, have confirmed Peter Williams as their new coach but are without Woodland.

Pontypool v Neath

Cardiff's retention at full back by

Pontypool has caused Pary to leave the club. Neath, without the injured Thorburn and Lally (playing at Twickenham), call up Bowling at full back and Enoch at centre, with Phillips returning at hooker. Pask makes his league debut at flanker.

Swansea v Llanelli

Swansea field 12 internationals in the same XV that beat Pontypool to emphatically last month. Llanelli give Phil Dawkins only his second league game of the season at No. 8 and await fitness tests on Simon Davies and Ian Jones.

BT Compiled by David Hands

GOLF

Langer survives a scare

FROM JOHN HENNESSY IN RABAT

BERNHARD Langer, by a long chalk the best player in the field, walked a tightrope of uncertainty on the second day of the Moroccan Open championship at the Dar es Salam course here yesterday. He came in with a second-round 76 and, at eight over par, had to wait several hours before he knew he would be called to the first tee today.

It would have been humiliation had he missed the cut, given the weakness of the field. Many of the leading players have avoided Rabat, so that not only is there a lack of quality but also numbers.

With no run on the ball, the Trent Jones-designed monster course played every inch of its 7,224 yards, save where a few forward tees were mercifully in use. Even so, Langer has yet to reach a par five in two shots. All this, together

with greens of variable pace, presented an examination of golf and character. Langer's holding out, in his own words, "was awful". It was imperative for his peace of mind, as well as his score, to get the ball close, but a series of four-footers put a heavy strain on his renowned equanimity.

The one for a birdie at the short 9th never threatened; he took two again from that distance to drop shots at the 10th and 11th; and he missed another birdie at the 12th. By now, he was threatening, and eventually inflicting, GBH on the turf in frustration.

He eventually tricked one in from 25 feet downhill at the 14th, but gave the shot back with yet another failure from four feet at the 16th. Finally, a slice of luck at the

18th, where his ball rebounded from a tree into the centre of the fairway, left him at eight over par. He then watched, no doubt with growing satisfaction, as the wind increased and rendered the monster still more frightening.

The guillotine fell on 154, ten over par, so Langer can breathe again. Fredrik Lindgren is the leader on 142 (74 yesterday). Ricky Willison, still holder of the English amateur championship, lies joint fifth on 145.

LEADING SECOND-ROUND SCORES: 142: F Lindgren (Swed), 74: 146: S Brownson (US), 71: 142: R Wilson, 70: 78: R Karlsson (Swe), 70: 75: 144: G J Brand, 70: 72: J Perna, 70: 70: G Llewellyn, 74: 72: A Coles (Eng), 69: 77: M Halberg (Swe), 71: 75: 147: G Smith, 72: 75: J Van der Velde (Nl), 75: 72: M O'Connell (Aus), 75: 72: M Bessingham (Nl), 77: 70: O Easdown (Den), 75: 69: J Morris (US), 75: 72: M Jones, 72: 75: 146: W Grant, 74: 74: G Cooper, 75: 73: A Forsbrand (Swe), 70: 75: P Quince (Swe), 74: 74.

Wigan content to cruise

St Helens..... 6
Wigan..... 16

BY KEITH MACKLIN

EVEN when Wigan are on a tight rein, they have speed and power to spare over other teams. Certainly, they had plenty in hand at Knowsley Road, where the expected fierce challenge from St Helens only materialised in the last 15 minutes and in occasional early spasms.

These moments of St Helens fire and brimstone were invariably ruined by the sloppy handling which has characterised their Challenge Cup games against Wigan, and the spate of knock-ons by the home side made Wigan's task the easier.

The champions did no more than was necessary to win and maintain the relentless progress towards another double of cup and league, and possibly a treble if they choose to pursue the Premiership instead of leaving it to others as a consolation prize.

Wigan lost no time in establishing supremacy. Miles, the Australian centre, playing at loose forward, cut through and switched the ball inside to Offiah, whose acceleration took him to the posts. Bodica kicked the goal.

St Helens produced a few flurries, and as many handling errors, before Wigan scored again. Dermot and McGinty opening up a gap for the league's leading try-scorer, Edwards, to notch his 36th touchdown.

At half-time, Wigan led 10-0, and after they had survived sporadic pressure from the home side, inevitably ending in dropped passes, they scored their third try when the powerful Miles crashed over in the corner.

Wigan rested on their laurels, and at last St Helens made an attack count. Hunte fumbled the ball backwards behind his own line, but made a virtue out of his error by turning round and catching the Wigan pursuers unaware. He sped 70 metres down the right wing before

moving the ball inside for Bishop to dive over under the post. Wigan, as ever, decided to have the last word, with Bodica landing a late penalty.

The result and pattern of play were a disappointment to the St Helens followers in the crowd of 14,699, who had hoped for a much closer game and a morale-boosting victory to spearhead an attempt on the Premiership from second place in the table. As for Wigan, they continue to give the impression that they can find an extra gear whenever danger threatens, and, in the second half, they were able to remove Gregory without noticeable loss of confidence or skill.

SCORERS: St Helens: Try: Bishop. Goals: Bodica. Wigan: Try: Edwards. Goals: Bodica. St Helens: P. Loughlin, L. Quirk, J. Griffiths (capt: P. Venn), P. Bishop, K. Ward, D. O'Leary, J. Harrison (capt: P. Forster), S. Neale, S. Cooper.

WIGAN: S. Harrison, F. Bodica, D. Bell, S. Parnham, M. Offiah, S. Edwards, A. Gregory (capt: A. Stoop), K. Stewart, M. Dermott, A. Platt, D. Bell, B. Mackinnon (capt: N. Cowie), G. Miles. Referee: J. Smith (Hull).

Results, page 31

Ronson inspires Hull to important victory

BY KEITH MACKLIN

HULL chose one of the toughest games of the season, the traditional holiday derby against Hull Kingston Rovers, to ease their way out of relegation difficulties. They won 12-8 at New Craven Park with two tries from Ronson, their Australian centre, and two goals from Eastwood.

Warrington hit Widnes with 11 points in the last ten minutes to beat their neighbours 19-8. The sides were level when Bateman grabbed an interception try and, as Widnes wilted, Kenyon ran over for another to maintain Warrington's hopes of gaining a top-four place.

Devereux continued his excellent form for Widnes by scoring all his side's points with a try and two goals. But on this form, Widnes will struggle to make any sort of impact on the Premiership, which has been a prime target for the Naughton Park

side during the past five years.

London Crusaders won their final second division home game 32-16 against relegated Workington Town to squeeze into a play-off place ahead of Rochdale Hornets, who went down 21-10 in the derby game against Oldham, which gives Oldham an outside chance of gaining promotion by winning their home game against Leigh on Monday.

Leigh have a vastly superior points difference to Oldham, but their defence collapsed against Sheffield Eagles recently, and another defensive failure could allow Oldham to overhaul them.

Sheffield Eagles are already promoted, and will be presented with the second division championship trophy if, as expected, they win their home fixture against relegated Ryedale York tomorrow.

Chance to play a round with Forsbrand

TO signal its continued sponsorship of the Volvo European Golf Tour, and of the Volvo PGA championship at Wentworth from May 22 to 25, the Swedish car manufacturer today teams with *The Times* to offer three places alongside leading professionals in a special Swedish golf day.

Our competition has prizes for three of our readers — two men and one woman — at Wentworth on Monday, June 1. The men will be part of a four-man team with Anders Forsbrand and the woman will be in Helen Alfredsson's team in an exclusive event which features another leading Swedish player, Ove Selberg.

It is an exciting celebration of Sweden's golfing progress. Forsbrand was a member of the Swedish team that won the Dunhill Cup and the World Cup in 1992, he won the Volvo Open in Florence this year and he stands third

in the Volvo Order of Merit. Our three winners will join the Swedish players and their Volvo hosts for coffee on the morning of June 1. They will then play 18 holes with the professionals on Wentworth's famous West Course, the Burma Road, followed by lunch and a clinic with the three Swedes.

For each of the ten runners-



Alfredsson: partner

up, there will a copy of the *Volvo Tour Year Book*.

To enter, study the questions below, write your answers on the entry form and send it (to arrive by April 27) to: Volvo golf competition, Sports Department, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The winners will be the senders of the first two correct entries from men and the first correct entry by a woman drawn from all those received by April 27.

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY
Employees (and their relatives) of *Times Newspapers Ltd*, Volvo or their agents are not eligible for entry. The Sports Editor's decision is final. No correspondence can be entered into. This contest is restricted to men golfers with a handicap of 18 or better and women with a handicap of 24 or better.

THE QUESTIONS

- Who partnered Anders Forsbrand to victory in the Benson and Hedges mixed tournament in Madrid last year?
- Who won the Volvo PGA championship at Wentworth last year?
- Who were Forsbrand's two partners in the Swedish team which won the 1991 Dunhill Cup?
- Who finished top of the Volvo European Tour Order of Merit last year?
- Who was the leading European finisher in the US Masters last Sunday?

ENTRY FORM		ANSWERS	
Name	1	1	1
Address	2	2	2
.....	3	3	3
Telephone	4	4	4
Golf handicap	5	5	5
Golf club			

Conflict of clubs in a

THE new season of the British Isles, which starts on Monday, has been marked by a series of events which have caused a great deal of controversy. The most significant of these is the decision by the British Isles Golf Association to allow a player to play for two clubs in the same season. This has caused a great deal of controversy, as it is seen as a breach of the rules of the game.

The British Isles Golf Association has defended its decision, saying that it is a necessary step to ensure the competitiveness of the game. However, many players and clubs have expressed their disapproval, saying that it is unfair to those who play for only one club.

The British Isles Golf Association has said that it will continue to defend its decision, and that it will not be swayed by the criticisms of players and clubs. It has said that it is committed to the principles of the game, and that it will not allow itself to be intimidated by a small group of players and clubs.

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Liverpool supporters angry with Souness



Souness: under fire

BY IAN ROSS

THE future of Graeme Souness as manager of Liverpool could be influenced this afternoon by the mood of supporters in the crowd of 38,000 for the visit of Leeds United to Anfield.

The result of the game will help shape the destiny of the League championship, with Leeds two points behind Manchester United, who have a game in hand. But that matters less to Liverpool than the future surrounding Souness.

As he continues his recovery from a triple heart bypass operation in a Cheshire hospital, the criticism of his dealings with The Sun newspaper shows

no signs of abating. Indeed, what was initially a murmuring of discontent at the grass roots has, over recent days, become a wave of indignation.

Merseyside still deeply resents the manner in which The Sun reported the aftermath of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster in which 95 Liverpool supporters lost their lives before the FA Cup semi-final against Nottingham Forest.

A few days after the tragedy, under the headline, "The truth", the paper accused the club's supporters of theft and violent behaviour and suggested that some had urinated on police officers who were tending to the injured and

the dying. The allegations were later withdrawn.

The response of the people of Liverpool was immediate. Copies of The Sun were burned in the streets and some newspapers refused to stock the newspaper.

With the benefit of hindsight, it seems inevitable that Souness, who is in his first full season as the club's manager, will now admit to an error of judgment in entering into a business arrangement with The Sun, despite his insistence that he agreed to deal with the paper only after it had offered to donate an unspecified sum to Liverpool's Alder Hey Children's Hospital.

It could, however, be too

late, for the protests have gathered such momentum and the condemnation of Souness's actions has reached such a pitch that it is being indicated that his position as Liverpool manager seems now to be untenable. Several of those who lost relatives at Hillsborough have contacted the club to demand that Souness either resign or be dismissed.

"Graeme Souness has sunk to the lowest form of life," said Barry Devonside, whose son Christopher, aged 18, perished at Hillsborough. "The quicker he leaves Liverpool and moves away from the area the better."

Les Steele, who lost his son, Phillip, has said that

he would seek to remove his son's name from the memorial plaque which stands outside Anfield unless Souness severed his ties with the club.

Souness's credibility was further undermined yesterday, when the Liverpool Daily Post printed a letter which he had sent to Sandra Ireland, a club shareholder, eight months ago in which he promised to instruct his players to have "no contact" with The Sun.

What further alienated the fans from Souness was that he and his girlfriend posed for pictures with The Sun on Wednesday, the third anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster.

Meanwhile, Souness

sought to calm turbulent waters by issuing a statement from his hospital bed, in which he insisted that, contrary to popular belief, The Sun had made contact with him on learning of his medical condition from "a third party".

The Liverpool directors are anxious to distance themselves from an increasingly acrimonious row, but there is clearly a feeling of disquiet among the men who appointed Souness 12 months ago.

While a club statement said only that the "comments and complaints" of supporters would be discussed at "the first appropriate time", the fear is that those who feel a sense of anger and betrayal will seek

to make public their discontent during this afternoon's game. And that would surely mean Souness's position, as well as his actions, would become the subject of boardroom debate.

At best, Souness's decision to "play ball" with The Sun is being seen in some quarters as foolish and naive. At worst, it was an insensitive blunder by a man whose knowledge of the people among whom he works does not seem to be what it should be.

Souness faces an anxious wait before learning if his own goal, precipitated by a mild rebuke or something altogether more serious.

Medical report, page 2

Leicester present formidable obstacle

Dalglish calls for players to dig deep to halt slide

By Clive White

KENNY Dalglish will be as popular a figure in Blackburn as Graeme Souness, his Liverpool successor, is on Merseyside at the moment if Rovers stumble to their sixth consecutive defeat against Leicester City, one of the emergent forces of the second division, at Ewood Park today.

From looking cast-iron certain to be granted membership to the Premier League just two months ago when even points clear, Dalglish's expensive-assembled team has inexplicably tumbled to a position where not even a play-off place can be taken for granted. Not that they would feel particularly confident about success in those after a history of recent near misses.

It is hardly the end-of-season scenario Jack Walker, the club's benefactor, can have envisaged when he began pouring his millions into the club last summer. Nor is it quite what Dalglish can have had in mind when he agreed to return to the game he quit at Anfield a year ago because of the intolerable pressure.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leeds	42	23	10	9	58	33	73
Sheff Wed	42	21	8	13	56	50	71
Sheff Utd	42	18	9	15	58	41	70
Sheff Utd	42	18	9	15	58	41	70
Sheff Utd	42	18	9	15	58	41	70
Sheff Utd	42	18	9	15	58	41	70
Sheff Utd	42	18	9	15	58	41	70
Sheff Utd	42	18	9	15	58	41	70
Sheff Utd	42	18	9	15	58	41	70
Sheff Utd	42	18	9	15	58	41	70

There was no sign yesterday, though, of him losing his nerve just yet as he appealed for greater effort. "We have to get passion in our bellies and our hearts pumping to start picking up the results again," he said. "There is no question of us being out of the hunt while it is still a mathematical possibility."

Speedie and Mirams, two of the walking wounded, may be pressed into action against a Leicester side which seems hell-bent on automatic pro-

motion after winning five of their last six games. Whitlow, signed from Leeds United for £250,000 last month, has recovered from a groin injury to further add extra impetus to the men from Filbert Street.

Another win today and Brian Little, their manager, will soon forget the disappointment of seeing Darlington, the club he guided to the fourth division championship last season, return yesterday from whence they had come after defeat at Brentford.

Cambridge United's home draw with Portsmouth should have cheered Little anyway, even if it did nothing to resolve promotion matters in the second division, with at least nine clubs in contention.

Ipswich Town, the leaders, will be desperately close to confirming their promotion, however, if they win at Bristol City and could even take the title if Leicester and Middlesbrough fail to do likewise. The match between Swindon Town and Wolverhampton Wanderers is likely to remove one or other, if not both teams, slim hopes of a play-off ticket. Otherwise, there is still a lot of nail-biting to be done yet.



Cool Kuhl: the Portsmouth captain heads clear at Cambridge yesterday

IAN STEWART

Portsmouth fan promotion fire

Cambridge United.....2
Portsmouth.....2

By Keith Pike

PORTSMOUTH yesterday fanned their flickering second division promotion hopes with a memorable display of courage.

The resilience and ability of Jim Smith's side, televised throughout the country during their two FA Cup semi-final meetings with Liverpool, cannot have been in question. But when, with nearly an hour gone they went 2-0 down at the Abbey Stadium, the odds on a recovery seemed as long as the average Cambridge United pass.

Then goals by Kuhl and Aspinall transformed what had been a predictable and, at times, one-sided march by Cambridge to a place in Football League history as the first side to recover from fourth division to first in successive seasons.

After the agony of their Villa Park's shoot-out, there would be few who would begrudge Portsmouth a chance to make the Premier League. Equally, if Smith had been able to nominate the side against which Portsmouth should start their recuperation, it certainly would not have been John Beck's. Taking frail bodies and sagging spirits to Cambridge is a bit like trying to cure a hangover with a pub crawl.

Hardly had first orders been called yesterday when

Portsmouth found themselves behind when Raynor's deep, in-swinging corner from the left was met with a crisp header by Claridge.

Subjecting Portsmouth to a fearsome physical examination, Cambridge continued to enjoy almost complete mastery, and their second goal, 12 minutes into the second half, seemingly ended Portsmouth's challenge. A fine effort it was, too, Wilkins running from halfway and exchanging passes with Dublin before scoring a goal out of keeping with their usual style.

With Anderson at his Waddle-like anonymous worst and Aspinall pitched forward to replace the injured Clarke lacking support it needed a midfield player to spark Portsmouth's revival. Kuhl managing to do from 25 yards what he could not do from 12 against Liverpool by driving a free kick low past Vaughan's right hand in the 67th minute.

Then, 12 minutes from time, Portsmouth stole a page out of the Cambridge manual for the equaliser, Symons flicking on Daniel's long throw, and Aspinall throwing himself among the flying boots to squeeze a header just inside the post.

CAMBRIDGE UNITED: J. Vaughan, M. Heathcote, A. Kinnear, A. Davies, P. Chapple, D. O'Shea, P. Raynor, R. Wilkins, D. Dicks, S. Cargill, M. Chatterton (sub: L. Phipps, sub: C. Llewellyn). PORTSMOUTH: A. Knight, A. Atwood, R. Daniel, A. McLaughlin, K. Symons, C. Burns (sub: D. Powell, W. Hall, M. Kuhl, G. Burles (sub: S. Wiley), W. Aspinall, D. Anderson. Referee: J. Kirby.

Darlington first to drop

Brentford.....4
Darlington.....1

By Keith Blackmore

DARLINGTON yesterday became the first Football League team to be relegated this season. Defeat at Griffin Park returned them to the fourth division from whence they had emerged only last season as champions.

For Brentford, the result had happier implications. It returned them to second place, reviving hopes they might yet achieve promotion

without recourse to the play-off system which proved their downfall last year.

Brentford dominated from the start. They took the lead in the eighteenth minute through Holdsworth. Four minutes later, it was 2-0. Blissett's header gave Holdsworth a head start and he scored again from 18 yards. Blissett added a third at half-time. Holdsworth crossed from the right and he headed past Prudhoe.

Darlington defended desperately, but it was against the run of play that they scored in the 79th minute.

Mardenborough's pass put Cork clear and he wrong-footed Bates before shooting past Benstead.

Two minutes from the end, Blissett crossed from the right and, in trying to keep the ball from Holdsworth, McJannet dived the ball past his own goalkeeper, putting a sad end to an unhappy day for Darlington.

BRENTFORD: G. Benstead, S. Ratcliffe, C. Houghton, J. Bates, T. Evans, S. Skellern, M. Seale (sub: K. Goddard, D. Kozlowski, W. Munnell, D. Holdsworth, G. Blissett, N. Smailington). D. M. Prudhoe, L. McJannet, D. Cowdrie, S. O'Shaughnessy, K. Smith, M. Gough, A. Gough, A. Toman, N. Cusack, C. Cork, S. Mardenborough. Referee: M. James.

Chelsea v QPR

Like many teams in anonymous mid-table positions, Chelsea and Rangers can afford to experiment and the former may well do so after last week's meeting at Leeds. Hitchcock, Sinclair, Johnson, Hall and Dickens are added to the squad. Ferdinand is fit to return to a Rangers side smarting after two consecutive reverses. Tilson and Roberts, the reserve goalkeeper, are added to the squad.

Coventry v Everton

Gallacher, Coventry's outstanding forward, returns not a moment too soon from a six-week lay-off to his troubled club. With two home matches left, the first division's Huddersfield ought to survive but don't bet on it. Everton may recall Watson in the hope of stemming a run of four defeats.

Liverpool v Leeds

A repeat of last September's victory over Liverpool would do nicely for Leeds which can surely ill-afford to continue with McAllister at right back. In place of the absent Sturges, Cantona's spectacular goal against Chelsea is unlikely to be a starting place. Liverpool's rest Whelan, who has a hamstring strain. Houghton, dropped for the Cup semi-final replay, may return.

Norwich v Notts County

County face the prospect of relegation today, knowing that even victory is only delaying the inevitable. There will be no favours from Norwich who, with Blackbourn, have their future to protect. Chris Short is set to earn an immediate recall for County who include Devine, a £240,000 signing from Stafford Rangers, and Matthews, a Loughborough University student.

Luton v Manchester U

A match that could go a long way towards solving issues at both ends of the table. The injury to Ince on Tuesday night which has put him out for the rest of the season only highlights United's impressive championship credentials since the arrival of the new manager. Robson, if unfit, be too seriously minded. Luton may gamble on the fitness of away, who have not played since November. Oakes, too, could be recalled.

Manchester C v West Ham

Fortune is not exactly smiling on West Ham who, with a recent two-time scorer, is out for the rest of the season with a groin injury. McAviney and Thomas are suspended and Allen and Small are doubtful. City may play Quinn with a protective covering on his damaged finger.

Nottm Forest v Aston Villa

Villa, looking to extend their unbeaten run to six, give Staunton a late test. Small stands by. Yorkie, their top scorer, is absent on World Cup duty but Atkinson is likely to remain on the bench. Keane and O'Leary will play as emergency defenders for Forest, still without Pearce and Walker. Laws, the right back, has, at least, recovered from injury. Crossley stays in goal.

Sheff Utd v Arsenal

For the first time in living memory a United victory today would rescue rapturous applause from a Wednesday side disputing a place in the UEFA Cup with Arsenal. Tracey and Rees, United's first and second choice goalkeepers, are both struggling with injuries. Arsenal have O'Leary back in the squad after a protective covering on his death threat last week.

Southampton v Sheff Wed

A Southampton side still needing to ensure their survival will find a difficult test for Wednesday, who have ten points from their last four games to make certain of qualifying for the UEFA Cup. The return of Hurlock and Cockerton from suspension is bad news for their unchanged team if Riddock is doubtful for Saints. Hall is on call.

Tottenham v Wimbledon

Now that their Premier League membership has been secured, Tottenham can start to relax at home. With one eye on the future, Peter Shreeves, the manager, has included Day, a youth team goalkeeper, and Milton in a party of 18 for the holiday programme. Shreeves has denied that Gascoigne cannot play in John Anderson's testimonial on April 28. Wimbledon are unchanged. Compiled by Clive White

Martin scores surprise

Lim Xiaoping, who left China after the Tiananmen Square riots, was upset by Camilla Martin, of Denmark, in the women's singles semi-final at the Pilkington Glass European badminton championships in Glasgow yesterday.

Martin, whose father, Bent, used to play football for Celtic, beat Lim 11-7 12-10.

Watson benefit

Boxing: Barry Hearn's Pro-Boss Sporting Club is staging bouts at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London, on July 14 in aid of the Michael Watson testimonial fund. Details are available from Pro-Boss SC, 10 Western Road, Romford, Essex, RM1 3JT.

Olympic place

Rifle shooting: Adrian Britton, of Guernsey, has been named for Britain's single rapid-fire pistol shot at the Olympic Games after setting a British record of 569 for 90 shots in Los Angeles.

Snooker: Paul Davies scored a 147 maximum and set a professional record of 379 successive points in winning the DDD Masters in Aldershot. Davies compiled breaks of 109, 106 and 147.

FOOTBALL

Barnsley League
Second division
Cambridge United (1) 2 Portsmouth (0) 2
Cambridge United (1) 2 Portsmouth (0) 2

Third division
Brentford (4) 1 Darlington (1)
Brentford (4) 1 Darlington (1)

NORTHERN LEAGUE: First division: Newcastle Blue Star 0, Blyth Spartans 2; Peterborough United 1, Stevenage 2; West Auckland Town 1, Shildon 2.

GREAT MILLS LEAGUE: Premier division: Macclesfield Town 1, Chalfont St Giles 2; Epsom 2, St Albans City 1; Epsom 2, St Albans City 1.

PORTUGUESE LEAGUE: Estrela 1, Sporting Lisbon 1.

ENGLISH SCHOOLS Durham Festival: Alnwick 0, Stockton 4; Stockton 0, South Tyneside 4; Peterborough 0, Hartlepool 2; Reading 2, Bishop Auckland 3; Rhinoceros 2, Chester to Street 0; Doncaster 3, North Tyneside 5.

NEWCASTLE LEAGUE: Premier division: Newcastle 1, Sunderland 0; Newcastle 1, Sunderland 0.

WATSON LEAGUE: First division: Watson 1, Watson 1; Watson 1, Watson 1.

WATSON LEAGUE: Second division: Watson 1, Watson 1; Watson 1, Watson 1.

WATSON LEAGUE: Third division: Watson 1, Watson 1; Watson 1, Watson 1.

WATSON LEAGUE: Fourth division: Watson 1, Watson 1; Watson 1, Watson 1.

WATSON LEAGUE: Fifth division: Watson 1, Watson 1; Watson 1, Watson 1.

BADMINTON

GLASGOW: European championships: Men's singles: Quarter-finals: R. Hays (Netherlands) 15-10, 15-10; P. J. Smith (England) 15-10, 15-10; R. Hays (Netherlands) 15-10, 15-10; P. J. Smith (England) 15-10, 15-10.

WOMEN'S SINGLES: Quarter-finals: R. Hays (Netherlands) 15-10, 15-10; P. J. Smith (England) 15-10, 15-10; R. Hays (Netherlands) 15-10, 15-10; P. J. Smith (England) 15-10, 15-10.

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WOMEN'S SINGLES: Quarter-finals: R. Hays (Netherlands) 15-10, 15-10; P. J. Smith (England) 15-10, 15-10; R. Hays (Netherlands) 15-10, 15-10; P. J. Smith (England) 15-10, 15-10.

GOLF

WEST HILL: Father and sons tournament: Seniors: J. A. and P. H. (Finn) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500,

WEEKEND TIMES

SATURDAY APRIL 18 1992

Britons in their thousands will renew their love affair with France this weekend, but the French say they are getting tired of the invasion.
Gillian Tindall reports

It isn't all the fault of Euro-Disney or, indeed, Peter Mayle. You might well think from the Gadarene rush to buy *A Year in Provence*, that Mayle had invented France, as the Beatles were supposed to have invented sex in 1963, or Columbus discovered America in 1492. Not only has France (like sex and America) always been there, it has been a popular British holiday land for a hundred years. However, the British are now enjoying a massive love affair with the place, and particularly with the intimacies of her interior — "secret France", "hidden France", "the real France".

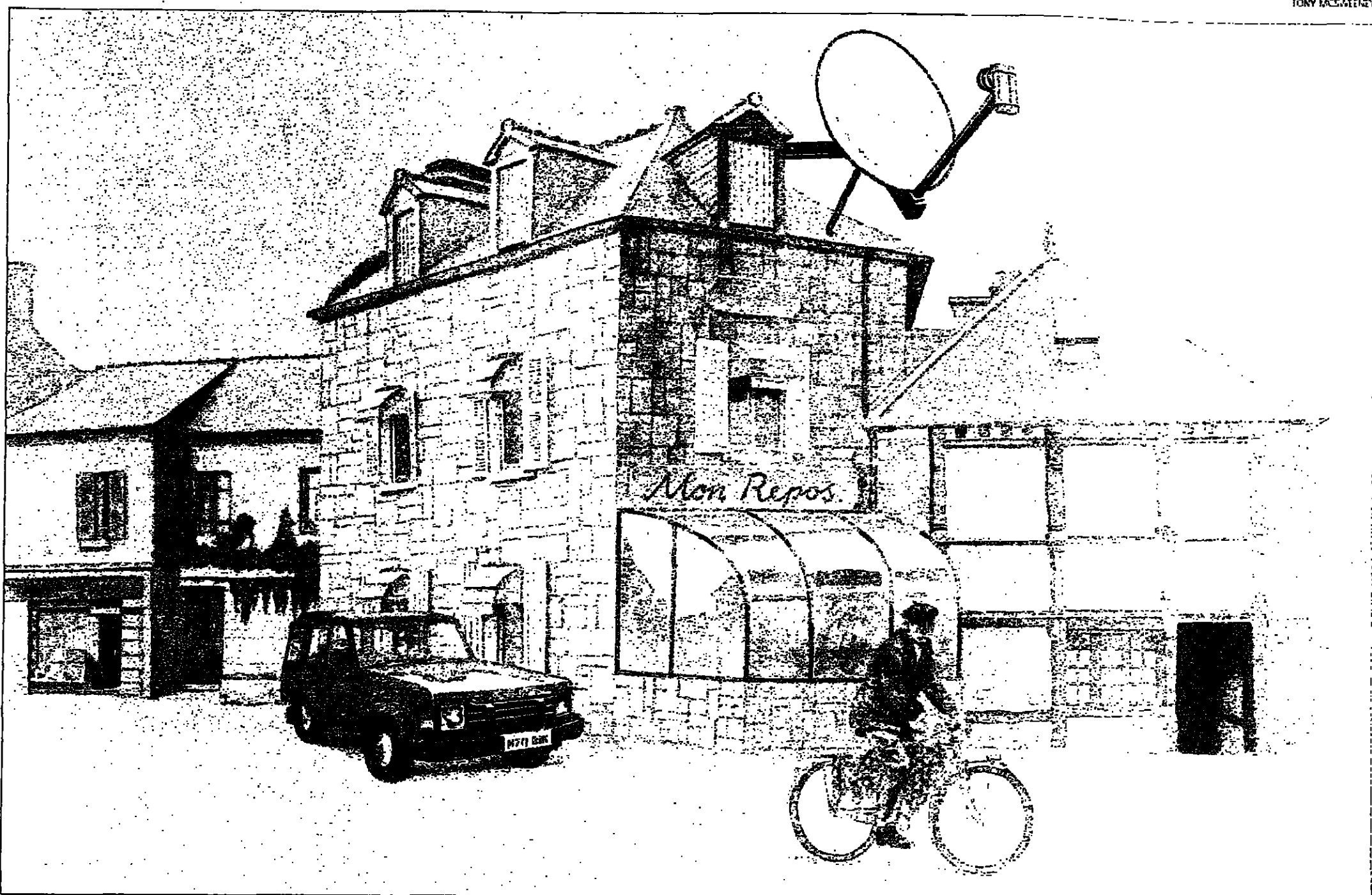
In the past, such a consummation has only been sought by visitors prepared for some personal effort and involvement, equipped with a willingness to embrace the French language and French rural plumbing. But instant "Daisy days in France" and "the Tranquil Lot", both for rent and sale, are now being peddled in newspaper columns and brochures by innumerable do-it-all-for-you agencies, and the traditional trickle of GB cars from the Channel ports has become a convoy.

Five years ago, let alone 20, London Underground did not carry posters advertising rural France as if it were a theme park, nor did the once-modest *gîtes* companies promote the place with an appeal both to ignorance and snobishness: "If you're looking for karaoke, you won't find it here." Colour supplements did not sell sets of puerile cartoons as "scenes from French rural life", nor did an insurance company put out a poster of a decaying French farmhouse (of all things) as an archetype of domestic security. Neglect and decay, the result of agricultural changes over two generations, are a problem of the French heartlands, and the problem itself now seems to be marked by and for the British as designer chic.

"If there were dreams to sell, what would you buy...?" House purchases in France by foreign buyers have jumped from 2,000 in 1987 to 4,000 in 1988 to 30,000 in 1989. A few of these non-French nationals have probably come from Holland — there was a French row as early as the 1970s about a group of Dutch virtually taking over a village in a mountainous area — but most are thought to be British. Thought, that is, by the French themselves, who are belatedly waking up to the fact that, in spite of the national mania for having everyone on record, no overall figures on foreign ownership have been kept.

From this year, however, the French government has commissioned a general survey from which a register will be compiled, the reason for this being the growing rumble of disquiet in the land about the "English invasion". Is the love affair turning sour? Have we, the English, been taking too much for granted (as usual, the French say)? Is *la patrie* once again in danger? If so, let us beware, and remember that the national anthem invokes *aux armes, citoyens!*

A preliminary shot was fired this past winter by a member of Le Pen's troop, with the appropriately France-for-the-Gauls name of Le Gallou. "The English," he said, "are slowly rebuilding the Plantagenet empire." One may dismiss this as paranoia (most of the English driving to the Channel ports this summer probably have only the haziest notion that English kings ever ruled chunks of western France; indeed our genial ignorance is one of the things the



Taking it with you: in many a small corner of France there is a place that is forever England, with a cricket team and insensitively converted cottages. Now the French are saying "Enough is enough"

Toujours l'Angleterre

French have against us), but some of what Le Gallou has to say is more sensible.

"When 80 per cent of the population of the Dordogne is English," he said, "then it will not quite be the Dordogne, even if the English there are very amiable." And even if his figure exaggerates, his remark goes to the heart of the 20th-century world problem of tourism. Beyond a certain point, the outsider tends to destroy by his very presence the thing he has come to seek.

The outsider tends to destroy by his very presence what he has come to seek

Concern about this is confined to the xenophobic right in Normandy (another old Plantagenet stamping ground) the British property boom of the late 1980s brought a great influx of English buyers.

The mayor of Honfleur, the historic little port on the Seine estuary, decided that it was in no one's real interest that so many buildings in his town and the surrounding countryside should be owned by absentee foreigners, whatever they paid. He persuaded other mayors in northern France to help him acquire properties for municipal re-letting at adjudicated prices. In the row that followed, in which the sellers had their say as loudly as anyone, the mayor hammered out his ethic on this complex problem.

Today he eagerly explains his distinction between *les bons anglais*, who "speak French and play bridge with their local neighbours", and *les mauvais anglais*, who have tried to treat his fief as a commodity. It is a matter of pride to him that he had more than 90 per cent support from his resident Good English when he managed to see off one particular unscrupu-

lous house agency. Many of the more remote areas of France do not have such energetic minders looking to their future and, in any case, they arguably need house-buyers, of any nationality, more than Normandy does. Throughout France, it is thought that one in 13 rural dwellings are now uninhabited.

The moral argument (familiar with many parts of Britain) that holiday home-buyers drive prices up beyond the reach of locals, therefore does not work for the more depopulated regions. The phrase "the farmer was only too glad to sell it" is frequently heard on the lips of those English buyers who care enough to want to be seen as the saviours of decaying buildings, rather than as predators. Others, of course, simply drool over "bargains" with all the knowledge and love of France of a stockbroker making a killing.

It is indeed the parts of France where land is cheap that are most vulnerable to the long-term efforts of foreign buyers. No bakers, no woodcutters anymore, no cows, even; in the end, nobody looking after this landscape that is a

precious national asset: just renovated, shuttered farmhouses and meadows returning to scrub. French holiday-homers at least appear frequently, usually have family roots in that part of the country, and plan to retire there; they know how the place works. Not so those who have tumbled into it, like Alice down the rabbit hole, from another world and culture hundreds of miles away across the sea.

At this point, I have to declare my own situation. Which is, intermittently, in a very small stone house with a vegetable garden in a village somewhere between the Loire and the Massif Central, which I and my family have owned for nearly 20 years. We do not know of any other English in the area, although we have been told of two families who farm land 100km to the south.

I am painfully aware that, unlike these compatriots, we do not contribute much directly to sustain the intricate and fragile organisation of the French countryside: nevertheless, I have spent much of the past 20 years in the pursuit of assiduous Goodness. I feel treacherous each time I return to London, and try to make up for this when I am in France by dissolving myself in the place... years of remembering to go to the butchers' vans for Mme Chose, of sincerely hoping, with farmers Truc and Machin, that the cloudless weather would break.

Years of helping my husband to mix cement while the neighbours offered gratuitous building advice (always received with craven respect)... days of being there on my own in lashing winter rains or petrifying frosts, days of listening to the reminiscences of the old and looking up everyone's ancestors in the local archive. "Oh, well, we don't count you," a village friend said dismissively when foreign buyers became a rumour even in this unregarded corner: "Vous êtes comme tout le monde."

I realise that not all, or even most, English buyers of holiday homes in France aspire to such an accolade of invisibility. Where, they might well ask, is the holiday in all that cement-mixing and social responsibility? The soft-edged vision of rural bliss can hardly co-exist with concern about falling lamb prices and school rolls. If you cherish French life to that extent, it becomes, like the toy rabbit in the story, inexorably real, and real-reality (as distinct from the commodity advertised in the flowery brochures) is clearly not wanted by most of those now seeking comfort and views.

"Perigord. Luxurious cottage, heated pool, two baths, two beds, scenically superb." Very nice. I am sure, but what does all this have to do with French countryside or life? It happens to be in France, but it might as well be anywhere. What is being so energetically marketed is not anything particular to France, but just the basic rural dream. It is on the same level as the basic golden sands dream that has caused the despoilation of coastlines throughout the world.

France is now being exploited as the latest real-life location of a cloud-cuckoo land of rustic charm that has already been pursued to extinction on this side of the Channel. Whatever the short-term reasoning about the money tourism brings and the favourite sweep-everything-else-aside argument — the "Why shouldn't people enjoy themselves anyway?" view, the example of other once-idyllic places to which such arguments have been applied over the years is an awful warning.

Essentially, those who think such arguments are good enough are in themselves bad news for any place, although it tends to be considered "incorrect" or elitist to say so. Until the damage has been done, and then it becomes a fact ruefully accepted by all.

Le Gallou was more polite than he need have been: some of the Dordogne English today are not amiable at all, however much they spend. Although, being English, they are less likely to be found supporting a deserving restaurant than to be buying beer and ice-creams in a café in Sarlat and complaining in ringing English tones in front of the proprietor about his prices. It is not Le Gallou

and his kind who are the chauvinists here: those who don't care what the host people think of them don't care in many other ways.

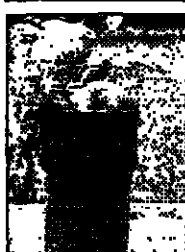
It is not amiable, let alone Francophile, to set up your own English restaurants in the land of good regional fare. This is behaviour on the *Viva España* level — even if the perpetrators believe themselves to be far from the slums of mass tourism — and so is the importation of English architects, builders and middlemen ("Can't trust the locals, you see"). It may seem less offensive, just "lovably eccentric", to run your own English-language newspaper or the Dordogne cricket team, but such activities beg a question: if you are as insular and uninterested in France as that, what, exactly, are you doing there?

Those who are now pillaging France, without any notion of what they may be helping to dismember, will only have themselves to blame if the French "turn nasty" (as they would say), and try belatedly to protect their patrimony (as the French would say).

If Switzerland, at one economic extreme, and India, at the other, can have working policies to prevent their native soil passing into alien, uninvolved hands, then it will not be beyond the ingenuity of the French to devise a similar scheme. Common Market notwithstanding, "We ought to have a quota," a French friend said to me. "One foreign family per village!" He wasn't entirely joking. More serious suggestions include repair-and-preserve subsidies for French nationals only, and the sweeping classification of large parts of France as a "non-negotiable asset".

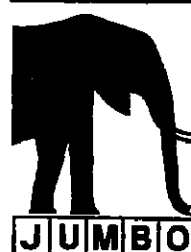
True friends of France may well feel the moment has come. Meanwhile, to all those joining the convoy to dreamland this summer, I recommend extreme amiability and a low profile. For your own sake, and mine, if not for that of France.

FOOD AND DRINK, PAGES 6-7



Frances Bissell gives recipes to celebrate Easter.
Jane MacQuitty comes up with refreshing drinks

JUMBO CROSSWORD, PAGE 14



Here's a clue about what to do over the holiday.
Try the Jumbo Crossword — you could win £50

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FILM

LA BELLE NOISEUSE (15): Jacques Rivette's hypnotic exploration of a painter and his model, struggling to complete an abandoned canvas. Close to a masterpiece. With Michel Piccoli, Emmanuelle Béart, Jane Birkin. Renoir (071-837 8402).

BUGSY (18): Warren Beatty as the gangster who invented Las Vegas. Sleek, witty, dazzling to behold. Starring Annette Bening; director, Barry Levinson. Camden Parkway (071-267 7034) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Haymarket (071-839 1527) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Mezzanine (0426 915683) Screen on Baker Street (071-935 2772) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).



Derailed: Sam Shepard in *Voyager*

CAPE FEAR (18): Demonic evildoer Robert De Niro terrorizes Nick Nolte and family. Martin Scorsese's ferocious remake of a classic revenge thriller. With Jessica Lange, Juliette Lewis. Empire (071-482 9999) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

DECEIVED (15): Golde Haim as the wife who doubts her husband's identity. Strong on atmosphere. Stars John Heard; director, Damien Harris. Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) West End (0426 915574) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

THE DOUBLE LIFE OF VERONIQUE (15): Krzysztof Kieslowski's brilliantly filmed conundrum about two girls (one Polish, one French) who seem to share a life. With Irene Jacob, Philippe Volter. Curzon Mayfair (071-465 8855).

THE DOCTOR (12): Callous surgeon (William Hurt) goes under the knife and battles a better person. Familiar material, but lively treatment. Randa Haines directs. Barican (071-638 8891) Camden Parkway (071-267 7034) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Tottenham Court Road (071-436 6148) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) West End (0426 915574) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

EUROPA (15): Intrigue and kaffee comedy on Germany's main network in 1945. Empty-headed fantasy from Danish wunderkind Lars von Trier. With Jean-Marc Barr, Barbara Sukowa. Chelsea (071-351 3742/3743) Everyman (071-435 1525) Curzon West End (071-435 4805).

FINAL ANALYSIS (15): Psychiatrist Richard Gere falls for a patient's sister (Kim Basinger) and gets more than he bargained

for. Overwrought pastiche melodrama; director, Phil Joanou. MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Oxford Street (071-636 0310) Pares. MGM Tottenham Court Road (071-436 6148) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Mezzanine (0426 915683) Screen on Baker Street (071-935 2772) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

FRIED GREEN TOMATOES AT THE WHISTLE STOP CAFE (12): Heart-warming lives of feisty folks down South. With Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, Mary Stuart Masterson; director, Jon Avnet. Odeons: Haymarket (0426 915533) Kensington (0426 914666) Screen on Baker Street (071-935 2772) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

HIGH HEELS (18): Lukewarm, talkative melodrama of family secrets from Spain's master of camp, Pedro Almodóvar. With Victoria Abril and Mercedes Paredes. Gaiety (071-727 4043) Lumière (071-836 0691) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) Screen on the Hill (071-435 3366).

HOOK (U): Grown-up Peter Pan returns to Neverland to fight Captain Hook. Much kid-pleasing spectacle, but little magic. With Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman; director, Steven Spielberg. Barican (071-638 8891) MGM Baker Street (071-935 2772) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Mezzanine (0426 915683) Marble Arch (0426 914501) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

KIKUJHI (18): Days in the barren life of a laundry attendant. Quietly hilarious minimalist exercise from Kenji Kusanagi. ICA (071-490 3647).

LIGHT SLEEPER (15): Lushly filmed elegy to the Eighties drug scene from writer-director Paul Schrader. With Willem Dafoe, Susan Sarandon. MGM Tottenham Court Road (071-436 6148) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031).

THE MAGIC RIDDLE (U): Playful jumble of fairy-tales, secularly aimed at small fry by Australian cartoon-maker Yoram Gross. Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Mezzanine (0426 915683) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO (18): Gus Van Sant's quirky portrait of two drifters searching for a home; striking and aggravating by turns. Starring River Phoenix and Keanu Reeves. Camden Plaza (071-485 2443) MGM Tottenham Court Road (071-436 6148) MGM Piccadilly (071-437 3561) MGM Shaftesbury Avenue (071-836 6279/7979) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Screen on the Green (071-226 3520).

SALMONBERRIES (12): Half-acrobatic and half-drama as an East Berlin escapee and a pretty girl in an Arctic community. Arch Percy Adion drama. Stars K.d. lang. Metro (071-437 0757).

STOP! ON MY MOM WILL SHOOT (PG): Pattering mom Estelle Getty comes to visit bachelor-cop Sylvester Stallone. Threadbare comedy for the easily pleased; director Roger Spottiswood. Empire (071-497 9999) MGM Baker Street (071-935 2772) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

VOYAGER (15): Strange coincidences and a pretty girl detail the life of a globe-trotting engineer (Sam Shepard). Sober, absorbing version of Max Frisch's novel, *Homo Faber*; director, Volker Schlöndorff. Curzon West End (071-435 4805).

EVENINGS OUT

BRUCE OLDFIELD FASHION DESIGNER



I'd like to see Sylvie Guillem and Laurent Hilaire in Kenneth MacMillan's production of *Manon*, with music by Massenet, on April 22. Guillem, of course, is a brilliant performer. I love MacMillan's choreography and the sets are usually very good at the Royal Opera House. I'd like to see 'Jewels of Fantasy', the costume jewellery exhibition, at the V&A. Jewellery is an important part of fashion and apparently it's a very broad exhibition covering the 20th century. The Eileen Gray exhibition at the Design Museum appeals to me. She was the British exponent of modern art deco furniture. Her most famous piece is a black lacquered screen: I'll be going specially to see it.

THEATRE

LONDON

BETWEEN THE LINES: Alan Ayckbourn (lyrics) and Paul Todd (music) link 19 of their songs from previous productions in a backstage play about putting on a show. Ebswara, Oxford Arms, 265 Camden High Street, NW1 (071-482 4857). Previews Tues, Wed, 7.30pm; opens Thurs, 7pm; then Tues-Sun, 7.30pm.

THE CHESTER MYSTERY PLAYS: Episodes from the medieval cycle in a bold Anglo-Portuguese co-production (God speaks English, Jesus Portuguese). Powerful visual images. Ten performances. Mermado, Puddle Dock, Blackfriars, EC4 (071-410 0000). Previews Wed, Thurs, 7.30pm; opens Fri, 7pm; then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm.

CONFUSIONS: Revival of Ayckbourn's five linked plays, not seen in London since 1976, to re-open the studio theatre. Mermado Studio (as above). Previews Tues, Wed, 7.30pm; opens Thurs, 7.30pm; then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm.

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN: Two new cast members, Geraldine James and Paul Freeman, join Michael Byrne in this superb play on the longing for revenge. Duke of York's, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (071-836 5122). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Thurs, 3pm, Sat, 4pm. No per Easter Monday.

FROM A JACK TO A KING: Witty and stylish version of Macbeth's climb to the top, set in the world of rock bands. Boulevard, Walker's Court, off Peter Street, W1 (071-437 2661 after 2pm). Mon-Sat, 8.15pm, mat Fri, Sat, 6pm.

LEEDS: Shelley Wilentz plays the hard-boiled heroine in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, adapted from Thomas Hardy's novel by Fay Weldon and directed by Helena Kaut-Horowitz. Quarry Theatre, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Quarry Hill Mount (0532 442111). Previews Fri, 7.30pm, next Sat, 8pm. Opens April 28.

MANCHESTER: Northern premiere of *Les Misérables*, the well-known musical. Not a dry eye on the benches. Palace Theatre, (061-236 9922). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Thurs, Sat, 2.30pm.

SCARBOROUGH: *Time of My Life*, Ayckbourn's 44th full-length play, set in a restaurant where three couples are supposed to be celebrating their happy lives. Stephen Joseph Theatre in the Round (0723 370541). Previews Mon, 7.30pm; opens Tues, 7.30pm; then Mon-Fri, 7.30pm, Sat, 4pm and 8pm.

THE GRAVITY SWING: The acrobatic troupe Ra-Ra Zoo are up to their clever tricks again, tumbling, swinging and dangling on ropes. Witty and charming. Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, W6 (081-748 3354). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mat Sat, 2.30pm. No per Easter Monday.

HEARTBREAK HOUSE: Paul Scofield and Vanessa Redgrave head Trevor Nunn's splendid cast in Shaw's state-of-the-art drama. Theatre Royal, Haymarket, SW1 (071-930 8800). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Wed, Sat, 2.30pm.

THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA: Alfred Molina and a superb Eileen Atkins in Tennessee Williams' play on sexual repression. National (Lyttelton), South Bank, SE1 (071-928 2252). Tonight, Mon, 7.30pm, mat today, 2.15pm.

PYGMALION: Frances Barber, Alan Howard in a Howard Davies production that some admire but others feel subordinates the text to a clever design. National (Olivier), South Bank, SE1 (071-928 8800). Tues-Thurs, 7.15pm, mat Wed, 2pm.

REFLECTED GLORY: Albert Finney very funny as the vicar of a play by his brother, Stephen Moore, but after this good start, Ronald Harwood's new comedy peters out. Vaudeville, The Strand, WC2 (071-836 9887). Mon-Fri, 8pm, Sat, 8.30pm, mats Wed, 2.30pm, Sat, 5pm.

WHITE WOMAN STREET: Five outlaws, loaded with memories, drift into an Ohio town 80 years ago. London premiere for Sebastian Barry's play which then transfers to the Peacock Theatre, Dublin. Baric, Shepherds Bush Green, W12 (081-743 3368). Previews tonight, Tues, Wed, 8pm; opens Thurs, 7pm; then Mon-Sat, 8pm. No per Easter Monday.

REGIONAL: BRADFORD: The Maly Theatre of St Petersburg returns with *Gaudeamus* (seen at UFT last year), its marvellous picture of life in an army battalion for social misfits. Tour goes on to Nottingham, Glasgow and Derby. Albamra, Morley Road (0274 752000). Wed-Sat, 7.30pm.

THE THIEVING MAGPIE: Opera North celebrates the Rossini biennial with a new production of *The Thieving Magpie*, in a new English translation by Jeremy Sams. The cast includes



Saviour: Suraya Hikal, instrumental in resurrecting an ancient Egyptian solo dance

Andrew Stone, Anne Dawson and Barry Banks. Nor Bolton conducts one of Rossini's liveliest and most appealing scores. Grand Theatre, 46 New Briggate, Leeds (0532 459351). Fri, 7.15pm.

THE FIERY ANGEL: David Freeman's spectacular production of Prokofiev's bleak melodrama, in which the gymnasts of the Maryinsky Acrobatic Troupe provide a constant, writhing accompaniment to the action, will not be to all tastes, but Edward Downes and an outstanding cast carry the evening. Sergei Leiferkus sings Ruprecht (except on Friday when Valery Alexeev takes over) and Galina Gorchakova sings Renata. Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, WC2 (071-240 1066). Tonight, Tues and Fri, 8pm.

JAZZ: SONNY ROLLINS: The title of one of his late 1950s albums, *Saxophone Colossus*, sums up the standing of this influential and effortlessly lyrical player making a rare appearance in Scotland. Next Sunday he will perform at the London Palladium. Concert Hall, Glasgow (041-227 5511). Tues, 7pm.

Rare appearance: Sonny Rollins

BARBARA THOMPSON'S PARAPHERNALLIA: Elegant compositions and tight instrumentation from the fusion jazz and her accomplished band including husband Jon Heaman on drums. Band on the Wall, Manchester (061-832 6625). Thurs, 8.30pm.

ROCK: THE CURE: The grand-daddies of new wave, Robert Smith and his band have been purveying their distinctive, melancholy sound since 1978. Riding high at the moment with a Top Ten hit single and a new album, *Wish* (see review, page 5), out on Monday. They are embarking on a short tour of smaller venues prior to a world tour. Gips in Bradford, Newcastle and Glasgow this week are sold out, but there are still a few tickets left for Dundee. Caird Hall, Dundee (0382 202513). Thurs, 7.15pm.

NORWICH SOUND CITY '92: A host of happening bands descends on East Anglia from Tuesday to next Sunday. Among the highlights,

prepare for industrial-strength sarcasm from The Fall (auditorium, Tues, 6.30pm), clear-voiced folk-rock from Eddi Reader (studio, Wed, 6.30pm), rubbery, bass-heavy sounds from Jah Wobble's Invaders of the Heart (studio, Thurs, 6.30pm) and electronic dance music from The Shamen (auditorium, Fri, 6.30pm). Waterfront, Norwich (0693 766266, info 0839 300357).

DANCE: LONDON CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE: LCDT opens its spring tour at the Birmingham Hippodrome, its first visit to the city for five years. The programme comprises Don Wagnon's jazz agitator, *Flow As A Bird*; Nina Wiener's haunting *Wind Devil*, inspired by the Arizona desert; and *Ritual*, a stomping, athletic number that has proved surprisingly popular with audiences. After Birmingham, LCDT moves to The Dergate in Northampton on April 30. The season opens at the Hippodrome on Wednesday.

THE HIPPODROME: The Hippodrome, Hurst St, Birmingham (021-422 7486). Wed-Next Sat, 7.30pm.

SURAYA HIKAL: An evening of Egyptian music and dance, presented by this fine artist who has almost single-handedly resurrected the ancient art of Raqs Sharqi, the solo female dance of Egypt. With her company, she presents a new programme which includes the lyrical classical form, Shaqqi, and Baladi, the lively urban form derived from folk tradition. Opens Thursday. Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1 (071-278 8916). Thurs, Fri, next Sat, 7.30pm.

BALLET DU FARGESTAR: Presented as part of the Turning World season at The Place, the Brazilian-born, Paris-based choreographer Brigitte Farges gives the British premiere of *Padure* at 7pm, plus, a new work developed in Israel.

THE PLACE, 17 Duke's Road, London WC1 (071-387 0031), Fri, next Sat 8pm.

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Masonic ceramics. Examples of the last range in estimate from about £50 to £600. Bonhams also have a sale of jewels at 11am. In Glasgow Phillips Scotland offer Art Nouveau items and studio ceramics, once again at 11am. Phillips (as before). Bonhams Montpelier Street, SW7, (071 584 9161). Phillips 207 Bath Street, Glasgow (041-221 8377).

BOOKINGS

BICO: Garden Venture and the Birmingham Rep present the world premiere of *Bico*, a new opera based on life of the founder of the Black Consciousness Movement, Steve Biko. The opera is composed by Fritz Pinnell and has a libretto by Richard Fawkes, both respected for their previous Garden Venture collaboration, *Survival Song*, which was nominated for an Olivier award. Following its Birmingham world premiere, the production is unveiled at the London International Opera Festival. Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Birmingham (021-236 4455). May 29, 30, June 1-6. Riverside Studios, London W6 (081-748 3354). June 10, 11, 13, 14.

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL: The festival has four main themes this year: the music of Tchaikovsky, Scottish composers, the neglected 20th-century playwright Harley Granville Barker and Glasgow-born playwright C.P. Taylor. Some of the highlights include a visit by choreographer and dancer Pina Bausch and dance company, absent from the UK for ten years (Sept 3-5); two programmes by the Mark Morris Dance Company (18-20 Aug); a series of concerts by St Petersburg Philharmonic (Aug 21-23); Scottish opera singing *The Oprichnik* by Tchaikovsky (20 Aug); Jeremy Sams directing the Greenwich Theatre Company in Taylor's *Schippel* (Aug 17-22); and filmmaker Hans Jürgen Syberbert and German actress Edith Clever collaborating in *A Dream, What Else?* a lyrical look at the changing forces in Europe (Aug 21, 22). Edinburgh International Festival (031-225 5756). August 16-September 5.

ENGLISH NATIONAL BALLET: The annual Covent Garden season brings the world premiere of a work from the Danish-born choreographer Kim Brandstrup, two works by the American David Parsons receiving their British premieres and a production of *Chorealis*, with new choreography by Ben Stevenson. Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, London WC2 (071-836 3161). June 23-27.

ELTON JOHN AND ERIC CLAPTON: In addition to the three evening stadium dates in June (26-28), an extra date has been added at Sheffield Arena. Sheffield Arena (Booking: 0742 565656/079977442999). June 21. Also tickets from Sheffield City Hall, Way Ahead Quilts, Leeds. Cavendish Travel, Piccadilly Records Manchester.

EXHIBITIONS

INFLUENTIAL EUROPEANS: British arts and crafts have never been as isolated as they seemed. In the 1920s the influence flowed outwards from Britain; between the wars it was returned through a stream of distinguished emigrés, refugees from Hitler. This substantial new show examines the work of such designers and crafts people; it includes Marcel Breuer with his bentwood furniture, Bernhard Wölfe with his typographical work, Marianne Straub with her fabrics, best known on London Underground, and the potter Lucie Rie, whose 90th birthday show has just vacated these galleries. Crafts Council Gallery, 44a Pentonville Road, London N1 (071-278 7700). Tues-Sat, 11am-6pm, Sun, 2-6pm (closed Easter Mon), until June 14.

ALL THINGS COMMON: Though the simple splendours of Shaker design have been well known in the last few years, it is not widely realised, even in Canada, that religious groups north of the US border, the Mennonites and the Hutterites, have produced equally distinguished work. This exhibition concentrates on household furnishings made according to the requirements of the community, including chests, tables, sleeping benches and textiles, as well as extraordinary calligraphic decorations called "fraktur", which are characteristic of the Mennonites. Canada House Galleries, Trafalgar Square, London SW1 (071-629 9492). Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm, opens Fri-July 3.

W. BARNES-GRAHAM AT 80: Among the most distinguished survivors from the heyday of the St Ives group, Barnes-Graham is equally divided in her allegiances between Cornwall and her native Scotland. Like other St Ives artists, notably Ben Nicholson, she has no difficulty with the representation of abstract choice: she sees no essential difference. The show is devoted to the last quarter-century. She enters it with abstractions based on the square and the circle, but landscape soon comes up again, as a basis, and she starts her Englishes with a new brand of brilliantly coloured freeform abstraction which often turns out to be landscape or still-life when looked at more closely. Still finely unpredictable. William Jackson Gallery, 28 Cork Street, London W1 (071-287 2121). Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm, Sat, 10am-1pm (closed today-Mon), until May 16.

BERNARD SHAW 1856-1950: One of the National Portrait Gallery's generous biographical exhibitions this time linked with the publication of Michael Holroyd's biography, this does not have its main thrust the showing of art per se. On the other hand, few figures of the 20th century apart from dictators have been so obsessively depicted in painting, sculpture and photography, and Shaw himself wrote on the subject of contemporary art. As well as the Queen Mother's Augustus John portrait and the Rodin bronze from RADA, the show includes a lot of documentary material about Shaw's work on stage, which

naturally embraces set and costume designs as well as portrayals of leading theatrical figures who worked with him. NPG, St Martin's Place, London WC2 (071-306 0055). Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm, Sat, 10am-6pm, Sun, 2-6pm, opens Tues-July 5 (open over Easter).

SOVEREIGN: Despite royal discouragement from any too lavish celebration of the Queen's 40th year on the throne, the V&A has made this the subject of its principal summer exhibition. The main focus is the Queen's changing image since 1952: the increasing media accessibility of the royal family is reflected in high-tech collections of television and news-photographic images. There are also more old-fashioned portraits, serious and cartoon, and inevitably coronation robes. No doubt the obvious popular royal exhibition for this venue, of the Queen's jewels, will be reserved for the golden jubilee. Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 (071-938 8500). Mon-Sat, 10am-5.30pm, Sun, midday-5.30pm, until Sept 13 (open over Easter).

Claret jug: see Influential Europeans

REMBRANDT: Unlike most Old Masters, Rembrandt has been news for the last decade, owing largely to the activities of the Rembrandt Committee, which has been demoting large numbers of once-revered Rembrandts into the work of pupils and followers. This show comes to London from Berlin and Amsterdam, and consists of 46 paintings accepted by the committee, plus 12 now ascribed to lesser men, with background material to elucidate the criteria. A fascinating contribution to the debate, rather than a clear-cut conclusion. National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London (071-839 3321). Daily, 10am-6pm (Wed, Fri to 9pm) (open over Easter), to May 24.

VIDEOS

THE COMMITMENTS (Rovideo, 15). Director Alan Parker puts aside his battering-ram this time in a tale of hard-bitten Dublin musicians forming a soul band in the urban desert. Fresh, funny, unpredictable, confidently performed, mostly by amateur actors including the mighty-witted Andrew Strong, 1991.

LE COP 2 (Palace, PG). Claude Zidi's follow-up to his popular film about roughish Paris cops. Comic flourishes and an infectious performance from Philippe Noiret offer an over-stretched, mechanical plot. 1989.

Andrew Strong of The Commitments

METROPOLITAN (Palace, 15). With Sullivan's wretchedly ironic comedy of manners, set among New York's debauches and preppies. Witty dialogue, engaging young actors, a delicious: a delight. Edward G. Robinson, Carolyn Farrow. 1990. The Clements, Carfax Films. 1990. opens Fri-July 3.

THE TWO JAKES (CIC, 15): Quirky sequel to *Chinatown*, with Jack Nicholson's private eye back on the beat, uncovering more murder and duplicity in Los Angeles. Hardly the equal of Roman Polanski's classic, but all the same. With Harvey Keitel, Meg Tilly, Nicholson also directs. 1990.

Film: Geoff Brown: Theatre: Jeremy Kingston; Classical Music and Opera; Ian Brunsell; Rock and Jazz; Stephanie Osborne; Dance; Debra Crane; Exhibitions: John Russell Taylor; Videos: Geoff Brown; Bookings: Kim Knight; Salerooms: Hugh Mallalieu

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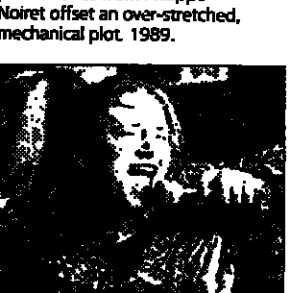
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METROPOLITAN

Put the lid on canned laughs



Lynne Truss wonders whether the forced hilarity during comedy shows is the result of gas or obedience training

On last Saturday's TV Heaven, just before showing us an episode from the yesteryear sitcom *The Fosters*, our guardian angel Frank Muir happened to mention that the series was adapted from an American original. This turned out to be a handy tip, because what followed went something like this:

(Living room. Day. Members of Foster family ranged around three-piece suite, busy themselves in intrinsically unfunny ways. Inexplicable outbursts of audience laughter.)

MUM (to son): I want you to go and collect your brother's shoes from the menders.

(Audience howls with mirth.)

SON: Oh, why me?

(Audience makes emphatic harg, harg noises, and stamps on the floor as if to say "Stop it or I'll die!")

SISTER (entering, towelling wet hair): Hello, what's going on in here?

(Laughter and applause amid loud ripping noise of audience splitting its sides.)

It was a bit mystifying, really. Had *The Fosters* been sold an all-inclusive bargain package, comprising concept, script and original canned laughter, sound-track? Or did all sitcom audiences sound like this in 1976, and we have just forgotten? Either way, the phenomenon of all this weird, unearned hilarity made me feel strangely weightless and insecure, and I remember clinging to the carpet as I crawled sideways to turn it off.

If there's one thing I can't stand, I reflected afterwards, it is comedy that gives me paranoid vertigo.

The received wisdom about laughter on comedy shows and sitcoms, of course, is that you should be serenely unaware of it. It is just a noise that operates at a subliminal level, telling you that it is OK to laugh if you want to. You only notice it if you are trying to read in another room, or if you pop along to the kitchen to fetch your hot-water bottle, at which point the sound-track reveals itself in its full, horrifying monotony. "Blah blah di blah blah," Ha ha ha. And blah di blah di blah too." Ha ha.

The idea that this convenient buzz-noise actually emanates from

REVIEW

You only start thinking about the human make-up of the audience when you don't have the foggiest idea why they are laughing, and suspect they may be mad

a group of individuals having a good time is somehow hard to grasp. The fact is, you only start thinking about the human make-up of the audience when you don't have the foggiest idea why they are laughing, and suspect they may be mad. Have these people been subjected to gas, or something? Were they recruited from the hyena park at Whipsnade? Are they perhaps watching *Fawlty Towers* on an overhead monitor? You want to rush among them and ask questions, such as "Did anyone try to hypnotise you in the queue outside, so that you are unconsciously programmed to go whoop-ha-ha at eight-second intervals?"

I mention all this because amid the many peculiar aspects of Channel 4's much-travelled *Sean's Show* (which started on Wednesday), the most peculiar of all was that the audience got the hang of it so quickly, and in fact greeted Sean Hughes's first entrance with thunderous applause, as though he were Vic Reeves on his last ever *Big Night Out*.

As a stand-up comedian, Hughes is admittedly a popular bloke, but the enthusiasm of the audience was bizarre. Were they perhaps over-excited about the trip to the television studio ("tears before bedtime," I warned)? Or had they just been treated to the most spectacular warm-up man in the history of

broadcasting? Heaven forbid that they had been told to whoop it up merely for effect.

I was forcibly reminded, I must say, of a sidewalk comedian I saw in America, who attracted quite a large audience for his show simply by persuading a handful of willing bystanders (myself included) to yell and whistle and stamp their feet and shout for an encore. Channel X

— which produces *Sean's Show*, along with Vic Reeves' *Big Night Out* and *Tonight with Jonathan Ross* — are clearly fans of the same guy. But the trouble with using this tactic for the first instalment of a wacky, off-the-wall series such as *Sean's Show* is that it suggests the audience have seen it already (and

loved it, of course), whereas surely some of it should come as a complete surprise. "That sock still isn't dry," said Sean suddenly, indicating a lone blue sock draped over the back of a kitchen chair. You could imagine this would get a lot funnier if he repeated it later on, but the audience rolled off their seats without more ado. Got it in one, apparently.

Sean's Show was certainly endearing; a sort of Pirandello sitcom with stand-up interludes, all performed by the narrow-shouldered Bob Geldof lookalike at such a headlong speed that jokes were scattered to the winds. The idea is that the loveless Sean finds that his sad little north London flat is really a set in a television studio, and that his corner shop and local pub are just a few steps away, across the studio floor. The words "student revue" spring to mind, but are suppressed as cruel. Hughes's "one character in search of an author" stuff is quite fresh, actually, and anyway he clings to it for a good reason. His supposed scriptwriter, Samuel Beckett ("and he's dead!"), exclaims Sean, overwhelmed, appears to be promising him a "hot date with Susan".

In the cause of gags, he rushes about, switching on radios for



The endearing *Sean's Show*: Sean, a Bob Geldof lookalike, finds his little flat in north London is really a set in a television studio

special announcements, makes surreal calls on a little red toy-phone, watches television, battles through wind-machine blizzards to the shop and the pub — but all the jokes are basically the same, because they all have the word "Alienation" going right through them, like the letters through Brighton Rock. When a tiny fragment of *The Smiths* comes on the wireless, Sean dances, morris-style with a bunch of daffs (lots of recognition-laugh from the fans), but the music finishes in a couple of seconds, and the disc jockey says: "And that goes out to all the young people with empty lives."

I suppose there are only a handful of options for a stand-up comedian with his own television series, and Channel 4 has now probably done them all. There is the straightforward spotlight-with-smoke-dub format (the *Jack Dee Show*); or the mixture of cabaret and location-stuff (last night's wonderful Julian Clary extravaganza, *Desperately Seeking Roger*). Usually, the stand-up is cunningly disguised, as in last year's *Paul Merton: The Series*, where Merton was endlessly discovered standing in a newspaper kiosk, pretending to be "in character" but really just telling jokes. "In the last war, we never used to worry about the bombs, because we knew they only hit you if they had your name on them. Of course, we were a bit worried about Mr and Mrs Doodlebug next door."

The trouble with televising stand-up comedians is, famously, that the medium eats up material. Jokes that can last for years on the cabaret stage disappear down the maw of the television without touching the sides, and are gone forever. You can't blame the comedians, then, if they look for ways to eke it out. But why is it that the idea of a comedian telling the same joke twice on television is an offence against decency?

Last Saturday's *Rowan Atkinson on Location in Boston* (BBC1) was very carefully captioned at the beginning, explaining that the material originated in a decade's worth of stage shows and that it therefore wasn't going to be completely new. But half-way through Atkinson's church-goer sketch (where he sneezes violently, and has to wipe his nose on the lining of his jacket pocket) I recognised it as a scene from a Mr Bean film and felt strangely outraged. "Swizz," I shouted, involuntarily. "Give me my licence money back."

The interesting thing about *Sean's Show*, though, is that the format actually suits his frothy, throwaway style rather better than formal stand-up does. The toy-phone is his apotheosis. Where Jack Dee and Julian Clary are precise, emphatic performers who don't waste a single word ("What ever happened to the elephant man anyway?" asks Dee, with a curled lip; "Just made that one film and never seen again"). Sean Hughes is a sort of zero-gravity performer who operates on the principle of the human scatter-gun, with only half-baked jokes for ammunition.

The *Sean's Show* vehicle is therefore ideal; and the resemblance to a kid continually thinking "What shall I do next?" too overwhelming to be ignored. All this explains why his fans in the audience grabbed the sock joke when it was offered ("Still not dry?", guessing that it was their only chance. "What a symptomatic blue sock it was, though!" I sighed judgmentally afterwards. "If only young Sean knew how to wring it out, instead of leaving it slightly damp." Good grief, I can be pompous sometimes. And I went, tut-tutting, off to the kitchen, to freshen up my hot-water bottle.

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A steamy study of seething sisters

If a lot of the Channel 4 audience feel claustrophobic at the outset of Lorca's classic play *The House of Bernarda Alba* tomorrow night, the director Stuart Burge will sleep a happy man. If they also resist the initial impulse to escape by switching channels, he is convinced they will be doing themselves a favour.

"Lorca is such a good writer. I think people will feel new again after having been through it," he says. "I hope it gives people a better understanding of the human condition."

This enlightenment will come at a price. Few would dispute the considerable emotional toll exacted as Lorca's tale unfolds. Set in pre-war Spain and designed by the celebrated team responsible for *Cyrano de Bergerac*, the play charts the seething passions and sexual jealousy unleashed in a household of five sisters, their battles of a mother (Glenda Jackson) and the family maid (Joan Plowright) when a young philanderer with a keen eye on the main chance presses his suit on the eldest sister (Julie LeGrand) — perhaps predictably, the only one among them with a dowry.

True to the text, Burge deliberately chose to confine

Lorca's classic captures the heady intensity of Latin emotions

the action to a few rooms of the house. The terrifying catcalls of a mob baying for blood is heard closing in on the village street at one point. Elsewhere the men are heard in the distance singing as they return from work in the fields. But these tantalising strains of the world beyond only serve to highlight the inescapable isolation of the women.

Most of the splendid all-female cast appeared in the award-winning London stage play at the Lyric Hammer-smith, which later transferred to The Globe. They include the two senior leads and, as the sisters LeGrand, Patricia Hayes, Suzanna Hamilton, Deborah Findley and Amanda Root.

But what Burge did not want was a filmed stage production: "It's done so often in televised opera," he says. "You just stick up the cameras and hope for the best."

Approached last year by Channel 4 to direct, along

with the Spanish director Nuria Espert — responsible for the Lyric production — Burge was intent on "conveying the physical, psychological and emotional danger in that sort of community", while preserving Espert's original virtues. "Her stage play was very high on atmosphere. You had a real smell of the Spanish," he says.

This was no mean feat, which probably explains why big productions of Lorca are so seldom attempted in this country. How do you dish up the full flavour of his fiery, intrinsically Spanish world to sophisticated British audiences without making the result risible — i.e., turning *Bernarda* into a tale of how five frustrated, increasingly hysterical women go bawny without a man?

Burge was only too aware of the potential pitfalls. "It is very difficult for the English to do," he says. "A literal translation seldom works in English. We used the translation for the Lyric but we amended it in rehearsals for this version."

But while the cast grappled with pining down the Spanish on the one hand, co-director Espert urged them to lay it on with a trowel elsewhere. "What we thought was fine and very near to being over the top, she

thought was only half-way there," Plowright says. "We had to move into another gear to get it right."

The actress suspects her parents' "spectacular rows" as a child fuelled her ease in stepping into the role. "They were tempestuous," she says. Far more difficult was the task of immersing herself in the stifling atmosphere of total repression that pervades the play. It is, Plowright says,



Isolated and repressed: Joan Plowright as La Pencia

"Watching any telly is a guilty secret, because I should be learning my lines. But there are a couple of things I'm addicted to. One is *LA Law*. This has been a slow but sure addiction, because they do it so well they manage to juxtapose incredibly heavy material with absurd humour from one scene to the next. And I'm completely fixated by Leslie Crowther's show, *Stars In Their Eyes*, which has the same kind of appeal as *Blind Date* only more so, because I can't believe how good some of the people are. A couple of bitchy reviewers have written that one doesn't really want to see Frank (Iff), let alone an imitation of him, but some of the contestants are really fantastic."

Belinda Lang is appearing in *The Dark River* at The Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond, Surrey.

GUILTY SECRETS: BELINDA LANG

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ANGELA BROOKS

The cure that killed off goth

Of all the movements that have emerged over four decades of British pop music culture — teddy boys, hippies, punks, headbangers, the baggy brigade and others — none has been quite so difficult to pin down as the goths. More a fashion statement than a cohesive musical phenomenon, gothic rock attracted a swarm of devotees whose sinister, all-black dress code was derived from the vampire movies of Bela Lugosi, and whose morbid cast of mind echoed the fantasy horror writings of Edgar Allan Poe.

Their favourite acts were groups such as Alien Sex Fiend, Bauhaus, the Southern Death Cult, The Cramps, the Theatre Of Hate and Fields Of The Nephilim. As the movement gathered momentum during the early Eighties, several established acts acquired a substantial goth following, most notably Siouxsie and The Banshees and The Cure.

However, the undisputed goth supreme was Andrew Eldritch, the singer and architect of The Sisters Of Mercy. A former languages student at St John's College, Oxford, Eldritch converted The Sisters in 1980, at Leeds University where he was enrolled for a degree in Oriental Studies. With his wan complexion, jet black (dyed) hair, ever-present shades and black leather couture, Eldritch forged an image that stamped itself indelibly on the rock psyche.

More importantly, with their early recordings, The

ROCK RECORDS

The Sisters Of Mercy: *Some Girls Wander By Mistake* (Mercury Release MR555L)
The Cure: *Wish* (Fiction 513 281-2)

Sisters Of Mercy created a strand of music that welded the cool techno-pop aesthetic of the American duo Suicide to the full-frontal punk-guitar dynamics of Iggy Pop's old band, The Stooges. Cobbled together with very limited technical resources — and making prominent use of a drum machine christened Doktor Avalanche — the result was a weird and often grim strain of mechanoid pop which, thanks to Eldritch's wracked baritone drawl, took on a dramatic quality of Wagnerian proportions.

A 19-track compilation of these early recordings, *Some Girls Wander By Mistake*, is released next week. An archivist's dream, it collects together all of the Sisters' recordings from 1980 to 1983, many of them items such as the primitively recorded debut single "The Damage Done", which were scarce to begin with and have long been deleted.

According to Eldritch it would cost somewhere in the region of £1,000 to acquire all these items individually, by diligent searching through stalls at record fairs or collectors' magazine small-ads. The price of rare and bootlegged Sisters material will, of course, drop dramatically once this

compilation of it becomes available.

Yet, far from celebrating his widely perceived involvement in the heyday of goth, Eldritch comes to bury it. "All that 'goth overlord' stuff is a load of nonsense, and it always was," he now proclaims, with vehement indignation. "To me the g-word is totally derogatory. Would you call The Doors a goth band? No, because they've reached that level of acceptance where petty, demeaning words like goth just don't apply to them, and I wish I was in the same position."

Thanks to the immense sales of their recent albums, The Cure have probably done more than any other group to popularise the goth ethic. Swathed in dense layers of dry ice their collective stage presence is detached and remote, while leader Robert Smith's fright-night image — spiky black hair, pancake complexion and a psychotic smudge of lipstick — has become a key component of gothic iconography.

Yet Smith, who also played with Siouxsie and The Banshees during the early Eighties, is no more enthusiastic about the g-word than Eldritch. "I've never actually liked goth bands," he says when questioned in this week's *New Musical Express* about the level of his involvement. "I've always despised The Sisters Of Mercy."

The Cure's new album, *Wish*, is released on Monday



Archetype goth-rocker with dyed black hair: Andrew Eldritch of The Sisters of Mercy

and while their last two "new" albums (*Disintegration* and *Kiss Me Kiss Me Kiss Me*) have both stuck to a rigorously downbeat formula, this is a much more versatile and alert collection. The firm, ringing guitar sound of "Open", the melodic sophistication of the

mournful "Apart" and the extraordinarily uplifting "Friday I'm In Love", are evidence of a band that is sailing on the crest of a creative wave far removed from the doomy and somewhat limiting moorings of goth as previously established.

As eventually happens to all such rubrics, the goth tag has outlived its usefulness. Discredited and disowned as it is, if its relevance to these two albums is in doubt, clearly a moratorium is long overdue.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Adventurous moves while touring

DANCE

Mukhamedov & Co
Derigate,
Northampton

from four Royal Ballet choreographers.

The best of these was *Undine*, to Ravel's music from *Gaspard de la Nuit*. To this, David Bintley set a solo for Deborah Bull as the sea nymph, frothing her legs in imaginary waves, skipping over the breakers and walking with hesitantly broken steps along the edge of the tide as she thinks of her human lover.

Matthew Hart and William Tuckett both contributed short sketches, which were danced by Larissa Bamber partnered by, respectively, Luke Heydon as a comic Svengali and Michael Nunn as a gloomy fellow, perhaps at the end of a

dead or dying relationship.

Ashley Page's *Quartet* for Bull, Hadley, Trevitt and Nunn, apparently to one of Liszt's Hungarian rhapsodies, was redeemed by the quality of the dancing from the rather turgid mish-mash of its structure. Page made choreographic amends with a cheerful finale for the whole company to the last movement of Prokofiev's "Classical" symphony, which set them all moving happily through frequent changes of partnership.

Undoubtedly, Mukhamedov has hit a good balance between new and old, and has found a menu to satisfy a demand long felt among audiences outside the big cities. He is also giving new scope to some of the Royal Ballet's best young dancers, among whom Bull and Hadley shine as brightly as the two principals.

No scenery, but good costumes (many of them borrowed from Covent Garden);

very good stage management; attractive accompaniment on two pianos from Paul Stobart and Tim Quatrough, with Zoe Mather playing the Ravel. There is another performance at Bradford tonight.

JOHN PERCIVAL

Achterland
QEH

THE Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker opened this year's Turning World season and for the first time she showed us men. Male dancers have performed in her company, Rosas, abroad; with *Achterland* (Hinterland) she introduced them here with a flourish. The house lights went down and a man erupted on the darkened stage with high-velocity rolls, runs and low swerves. This masculine language estab-

lished, the cast's three men articulated it throughout.

A pianist, Rolf Hind, and violinist, Irvine Ardini, are vividly present on stage, playing nervy or densely filigree solo scores by Ligeti and Ysaÿe. The piece is built in interlocking segments of sound and silence, dance and stillness, a stage that is bare or variously filled with chairs and low tables.

Such dualities make up Keersmaeker's artistic hinterland. It is a place where movement phrases are both coolly minimalist and palpably expressive; where unity shifts into disunity; where group anonymity co-exists with individuality, where men and women remain separate, but are shown to be similar.

Sometimes, like the men, the five women cover the stage with violent curving trajectories and crashes. At other times they form geometric lines and opt for near-stasis, perching

on the chairs, sitting on the floor or the tables. Here they perform elaborate ballets of cumulative leg and foot movements, with torsos arching, knuckles rapping against the floor, a hand brushing through hair. Keersmaeker is fascinated by the way a movement alters according to which limb performs it, what sex the person is, and what they are wearing.

They have more varied choreography, but it is a man who has the most stunning solo spot. He executes an extended dance of hip shakes and twitches that mirror a much shorter, earlier sequence by a woman. On the woman it had looked archly feminine; on the man it seemed the human equivalent of a mating display, attention-seeking and playful. And so, as the piece closed, the divisions between the sexes blurred until they mixed into a single dancing mass, each person gloriously, brazenly individual.

NADINE MEISNER

And a playwright revived with love

THEATRE

A Woman Killed
With Kindness
The Pit

dies of remorse, united briefly in his arms as she expires.

In a society where, on stage at least, death was commonly the fate of the unfaithful, Frankford's actions must have seemed startlingly generous.

Also significant is the play's immense contemporary success, for while the domestic life of the gentry was still some way from the experience of the average theatre goer, it was a good deal closer than the doings of Italian princelings and black governors of Cyprus.

True, the sinner dies, and

Frankford's gentleness is not that same thing as forgiveness, but one of the features that makes the play so interesting is Heywood's insistence on the moral value of being kind. This emerges in the sub-plot of the quarrelling knights, where one falls in love with the other's sister and discovers the way to happiness lies through a change of heart. Valentine Pelka and Sylvester Le Touzel, frail and wondering, make the reconciliation inexpressibly moving.

In a play where the daily life of servants is frequently shown, Mitchell's designer (Vicki Mortimer) sets the action on a stage carpeted with peat: this is a country setting, where floors are straw-covered and the ruined knight grubs potatoes from the soil. It is also a Christian community, and throughout the play characters

turn and pray to the stone crucifix placed boldly front of stage. When Saskia Reeves, as Frankford's wife, finds herself tranced with desire for Barry Lynch's Wendoll, she turns her eyes guiltily at Jesus.

A while passes before the play's concern reveals itself but Michael Maloney's sober Frankford is, from the beginning, a charismatic figure, never showy, not over-ready with smiles. His keenness to offer gifts hints at emotional uncertainty beneath the propriety. A way he has of pulling off his gloves is a revealing detail. In the outburst against his wife's momentarily ungoverned arms and Reeves's fluttering hands open our eyes to the passions searing them. The acting of the household servants is also exemplary.

JEREMY KINGSTON

East coasting

Next week much of the British pop world will desert its London base and descend upon a quiet East Anglian city, Norwich, to be the host of Sound City 92, a venture that is unique both because it is jointly sponsored by the record business, the BBC and the Musicians' Union, and because of its location outside the capital.

The programme for this festival promises six days in which almost every public space will reverberate to pop. Each night Radio 1 is to broadcast three hours of live rock from the city's new Waterfront venue. There are to be seminars and workshops. Music films (including Dick Lester's *It's Trud, Dud!* and Wim Wenders's latest, *Until the End of the World*) will accompany the din.

The focus, though, will undoubtedly be upon the acts booked for the Radio 1 sessions, hosted by Mark Goodier. They are an eclectic mix of the admirable, the worthy, the hyped and the famous-on-the-fade, plus a smattering of local acts who have graduated to metropolitan success such as the moody rock of Catherine Wheel from Great Yarmouth where the rock usually has writing through the middle). Out of town talent includes Carter the Unstoppable Sex Machine, Des'ree, the Pasadenas, L7, Nick Cave, Bomb the Bass, The Shamen and The Fall. In a gesture of regional balance, these acts share the nightly bill with Norfolk groups.

For Radio 1, the event is an opportunity to demonstrate its support for new talent and the regions. For the record industry, it is a good shop window, an acknowledgement of its need for new artists. For the Musicians' Union, it is a chance to advertise and recruit.

For the local fans it is an opportunity to see acts that might otherwise never visit East Anglia. The common-

place expectations of musical life in London are not matched outside. Many towns lack venues, and where they exist there is no guarantee anyone will visit. Even living in a city like Norwich — which boasts two decent venues — you see only a small proportion of the country's indigenous or visiting stars.

But there is another side to this story. An extraordinary amount of music continues to be made outside the capital. The school rock band competitions, the local studios, the pub venues, all testify to people's desire to make a noise. The Waterfront, which is at the centre of the Sound City week, came about partly as a result of local lobbying by frustrated musicians who talked the city council into underwriting the venue.

This local activity takes on added significance because of the importance of place in rock's rhetoric. Rock has to have roots to make it authentic. From this emerges the idea that certain cities make fashionable sounds. In the 1960s, it was Liverpool; in the 1970s, Coventry; more recently, Manchester. It is yet to be Norwich.

There is, in fact, no profound connection to be made between place and music. Only the most romantic can actually hear the cities in their progeny. The fashion for cities and their music has more to do with the happy coincidence of talents, opportunity and media interest. The catch, of course, is that there is virtually no regional music industry. The talents may come from the regions, but it always ends up in London. For a week, Norwich will be on the musical map, but the record industry will be back in the capital in time for work on Monday.

JOHN STREET

Sound City 92 runs from Tuesday to Sunday. Details from the Waterfront, 130-141 King Street, Norwich (0603 790200).

Sentimental journey

CONCERT

LPO/Mehta
Festival Hall

not without textual delicacy (and a notably graceful flute solo). The seven-beat metre in the finale was played with spirit and panache.

Proceeding it was an almost genial account of Stravinsky's *Symphony in Three Movements*, where Mehta conveyed not so much affection for this sharply written music as a kind of patronising tolerance, smoothing out the crisp edges of instrumentation and almost flippant in places (the middle movement particularly). His most noteworthy contribution was to position the piano and harp at the centre front of the orchestra where their players could register the more strongly.

Maybe Stravinsky would have benefited from reducing the full strings by a desk or two in each section as Mehta did for Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto. Was this in the interest of ensemble compactness, or to benefit the teenage soloist, Maxim Vengerov?

Although his playing was loudly acclaimed, it seemed to me that his undoubted technical proficiency achieved a very commonplace reading of the work, bland and charmless, and without any apparent awareness of more than the surface value of the notes. The orchestra's indulgent, sometimes coarse-textured support followed an opening Prelude to *Khovanshchina* that Mehta sentimentalised to sound more like Puccini than Mussorgsky.

NOEL GOODWIN



Unhappy couple at a happy moment: Saskia Reeves and Michael Maloney

THE SUNDAY TIMES

The Gershwins and the courting crooners

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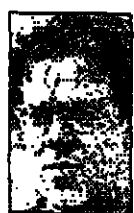
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Ale fellows well met

How does a Belgian tie his shoelaces? The answer is a sight-gag which I shan't spoil by describing: it cannot be verbally conveyed. You must ask someone Dutch or someone French to show you. And that is the point. Belgium is the butt of jokes told by both its neighbours. Of course certain of the qualities ascribed to Belgians in these jokes are those elsewhere ascribed to the Irish, the Polish, whoever. None the less Belgium is regarded as funny. Though being a fan of the place — perhaps I should say the fan — I'd suggest that it's peculiar rather than ha-ha. Infinitely peculiar indeed: so close, so subtly different. Part of its appeal is no doubt that it mirrors England, but an imaginary England or, at least, a now vanished England.

This is not, perhaps, as surprising as it might seem, for it used to be a devotedly Anglophile country. Though I suspect that this Anglophilia did not extend to our food. Beer, yes — Belgium may produce more than 700 different brews (compare that to Wales which is hardly smaller but is unique in its problem of having no alcoholic beverage it can call its own) yet it



Jonathan Meades, a (or the) fan of Belgium, gets down to some serious beer business in north London

demanded more there are English beers on sale in Belgium which you never see at home.

The country's bibulous preoccupations — there are also hundreds of genevers — are matched by its gastronomic ones. The standard of its everyday restaurants is the highest in Europe, certainly superior to France. A large, voracious, informed and conservative bourgeoisie demands and gets cooking of persistent accomplishment. It is not *all* mussels, chips and mayonnaise any more than England is all roast beef and Yorkshire pudding or Italy all pasta and pizza.

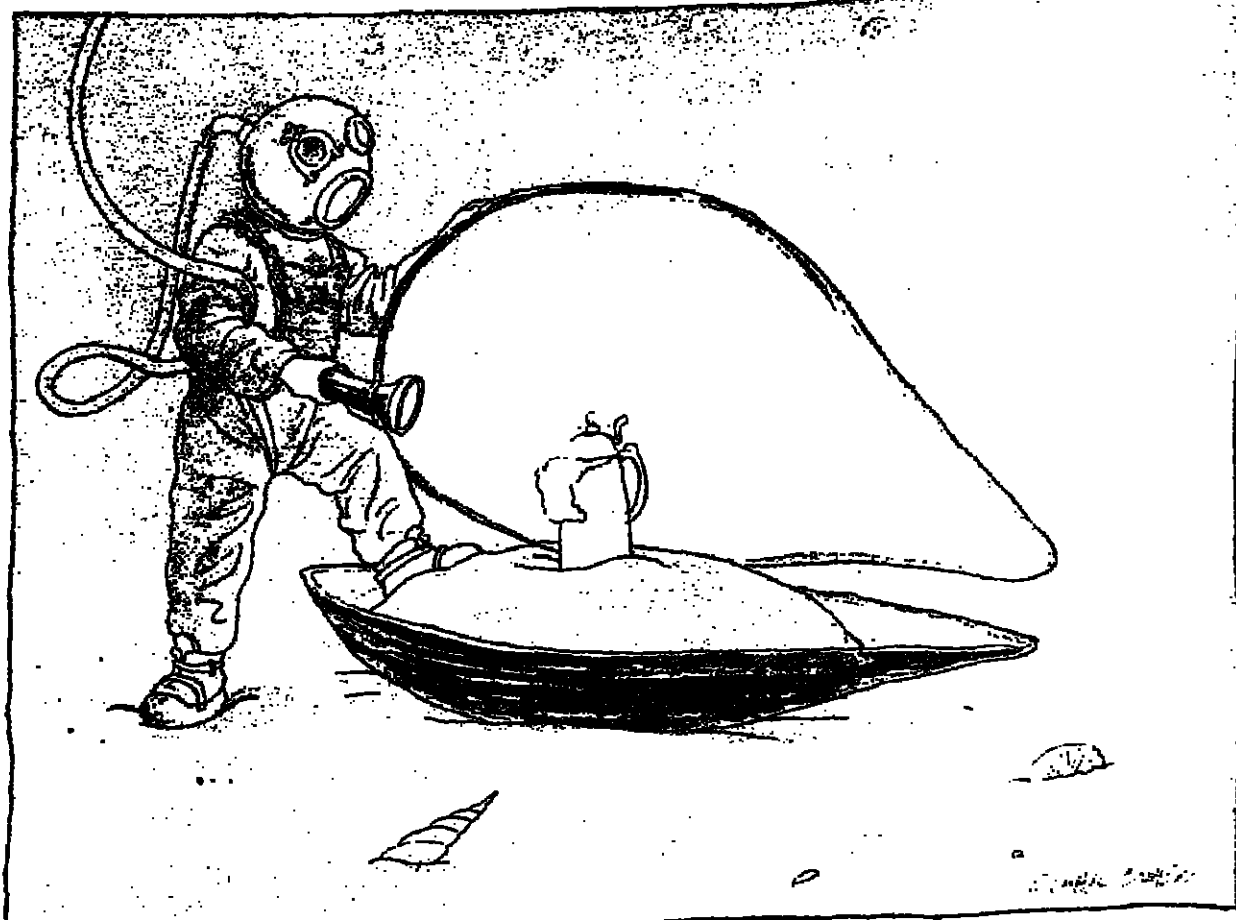
The trouble with Belgio, opposite the Roundhouse in north London, is that it feels bound to adhere to the caricature. This is not the first Belgian restaurant to have been set up in London, but it is the first that looks to have been undertaken in earnest and the first which has a better than

even chance of survival. I hazard thus not because of the quality of its cooking but rather on account of the authenticity, scope and rarity of its repertoire. There can be no question that the majority of its dishes are characteristically Belgian, even if they are pretty obvious and determined not to offend. So there's no horsemeat, and the Brussels offal dish called chosels is not offered: there's no place for eel in green sauce: there are none of the resourceful potes that use everything but the squeal, and so on.

Still there are enough generally unfamiliar items here to make it attractive to the gastronomically curious. Mussels are prepared in about a dozen ways: I'm not convinced that a sauce of bacon and beer is much more than an oddity — though like anything else it largely depends on the skill with which it's done. Beer cooking, which is one of the glories of the Belgian kitchen,

is represented by carbonnade, i.e. beef braised in beer, and by rabbit cooked in kriel, cherry flavoured beer. The rabbit was OK, though it might have been larded to counter desiccation. Stoemp, a form of bubble and squeak which includes carrot, is served with heavily smoked wild boar sausage — a successfully tarted up version of bangers and mash. Waterzooi is a creamy, soupy stew that was (probably) originally made with fish but which nowadays often includes chicken. Belgo's version is piscine and indicates a level of ambition which most of the cooking lacks. It's pretty good. Prawn croquettes are less pleasing. They are like a product of industrial cooking, something from a freezer cabinet — Findus style crust and soupy interior. The cheeses are Belgian and include Here, which is probably best eaten at lunchtime and best accompanied with beer.

For some reason Belgo offers Danish akavit rather than Belgian genever. Chocolates are, of course, Belgian, and so are Tigris cigarettes which have a delightful packet unchanged since the 1950s. Beyond these are the beers which are probably the real point of the place. Belgian beer is a



complicated subject. The variety is amazing. Beers flavoured not only with cherries but with mint, plums, spices. Beers the colour of barley sugar. Beers of 11 per cent

alcohol, cooked beers, sweet beers, beers which (according to Baudelaire) are "synonyms of urine", abbey beers, home beers. Belgo's selection hardly begins to scratch the surface

but it is nevertheless a good sampler. There are various specialist shops which carry as extensive a range but to buy the heavy retail and swig it at home would mean missing the beguilingly bizarre premises that Belgo has wrought out of a shop and a former lean-to.

The street front is concrete, incised with the name in elemental sans serif. The door handle is a very heavy hunk of nautical scrap, not the last that will be encountered — the famous breaker's yard at Tipner on the edge of Portsmouth may have been effectively plundered. Once through this door you enter a corridor designed for sensory deprivation and vertiginous imbalance. It slopes. The walls are concrete. Suddenly it all opens up. Down to the left is a chasm, the kitchen. Instead of

chucking yourself off the Highgate Archway or Clifton Bridge you could always aim for boiling fat a storey down. The waiters, dressed in habits like maroon monks, would no doubt talk you out of it. The dining room is long, half a barrel vault. Waxed wood tables, chairs whose legs are shaped like axe handles. These walls are also incised with such words as Donkeythistle, Rumblegut, Slapjaw, Assface, Sourchop, Sowsticker. What is their source? A translation of Rabelais. Who was not Belgian. The lad hailed from Chinon, which is where I'll go next. That's Chinon in Shepherd's Bush, not Chinon in Touraine.

Belgo
72 Chalk Farm Road, NW1
(071-267 0718)
Lunch and dinner every day, £45 plus.

JONATHAN MEADES'S RESTAURANT GUIDE

Marks — up to a maximum of ten — are awarded for cooking and although they are intended to reflect value for money they are not determined by this consideration alone: certain very costly restaurants are very good, certain very cheap ones are, too. All prices given are approximate — they are for a three-course meal for two, including modest wine and an aperitif. Dishes are mentioned only as an indication of the repertoire — and are subject to frequent change. Reviews included in this directory are distilled from articles previously published in the main column. It is not only discourteous but illegal to dishonour bookings: that goes for restaurants as well as customers. J.M.

GOOD SERVICE

L'Hippocampe
63 Fritill Street, London W1
(071-734 4545)

A fine French fish restaurant. The inventive marine décor is witty, full of delightful surprises. The cooking is classy: eels stewed in red wine, skate with cabbage and a juniper sauce, raw tuna with a lovely potato salad, mussels with shallot broth. The service could hardly be bettered. £60 plus. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat.

Wilsons
55 Jermyn Street, London SW1
(071-629 9955)

Admirably straightforward non-"heritage" British cooking — unostentatious fish dishes and terrific savouries are among the things that make this a one-off among the few worthwhile native restaurants in London. The service is so good it wraps you in a swaddling cloth of beneficence for which you pay around £140. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat.

Christchurch Glen
Christchurch Road, New Milton, Hampshire
(0425 275341)

This is the luxury hotel. Despite a rather unpromising setting in the sprawl of outer Bournemouth it sets the standard for all British "country house" hotels. The service is astonishing, yet there is nothing impersonal about it. The cooking is luxury hotel stuff but done with a flair and talent that is rare: scallops

with shredded mangetouts and butter sauce; raviolis of fennel; millefeuille of salmon and spinach; marvellously kept cheeses; terrific puddings. Numerous good bottles for around £12. At dinner two will pay about £90, lunch is less. Lunch and dinner every day.

Honours Mill
87 High Street, Edenbridge, Kent (0732 866757)

A beautifully converted clapham mill in commuterland. The cooking, by Neville Goodhue, is polished but rather timid in its flavouring. When that is put right, this will be worth the trip. Fish tends to be better than meat — red mullet with a red wine sauce, smoked fishes in jelly etc. Impressive wines, courteous service. £75. Lunch Tues-Fri and Sun, dinner Tues-Sat.

Le Gavroche
43 Upper Brook Street, London W1 (071-408 0881)

The rather ancien regime meat cookery can be outstanding: the daube of beef is massive and comforting and possesses a depth of flavour that recalls a different age. The service is marvellous. The prices, especially of the wines, are frightening. The basement dining room is a shrine both to the Roar brothers and to stately sybaritism. The frivolity of "experimental" cooking is totally shunned: this cooking is based in classical taste without gimmicks. At lunch two might just get out for £65 to £70. In the evening £140 is nearer the mark. Lunch and dinner Mon-Fri.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The Greenhouse
27a Hay's Mews, London W1
(071-499 3331)

Hidden away on the bottom floor of a banal Mayfair apartment block, decorated with an apparently witty desire to resemble a respectable south coast hotel of 30 years ago, pleasantly modest in everything but its cooking, which is marvellous. Gary Rhodes is the only top flight chef in Britain who is actually interested in British home cooking — faggots, boiled bacon, bread and butter pud, braised oxtail, smoked haddock with a cheese crust, grilled and soured herrings. The sweets are terrific. The service is comforting and friendly, the wine list too short. £40-£50. Lunch Sun to Fri, dinner Mon to Sat.

The Brackenbury
129-131 Brackenbury Road, W6 (081-748 0107)

A rather pretty former wine bar in a Pooterish backwater between Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush. The cooking is astonishingly good and astonishingly cheap. The owner-chef, Adam Robinson, is more French inclined than many of his contemporaries: the real delights of his ever changing menu are such things as soufflé-like pancakes made with potato and egg and served with salmon roe, or roast lamb with pesto flavoured mash. His duck confit is well flavoured, tempura-like vegetable fritters are served with a good salad. Mint, dill and basil are used in numerous dishes. The wines are as cheap as the food, the service is swift and friendly. £40. Lunch

Sunday and Tues-Fri, dinner Tues-Sat.

Lychgate
5a Church Street, Old Town, Berthill-on-Sea, East Sussex
(0424 212193)

Small and homely restaurant in part of a Wealden house in a pretty street of weather-boarded buildings. Accomplished and well-judged cooking, amiable service. The menu is very understated — when it says lamb casserole you get just that, but done with a sureness of touch that is remarkable. Impressive starters, delicious sweets. The prices are most reasonable. £35-£40. Lunch Wed-Fri and by reservation on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Dinner Tues-Sat.

Kensington Place
201 Kensington Church Street, London W8 (071-727 3184)

Large, loud, vital. This is a mould-breaker, the metropolitan venue of the moment. A combination of chef (Rowley Leigh), restaurateur (Simon Slater) and architect (Julian Wickham) has created something far beyond a mere showplace for kitchen excellence. Nowhere else in London offers such cooking at such prices. Nowhere else in London is so varied in its clientele. Leigh is the most intelligent English chef of his generation. His own inventions are remarkable: chicken and goat cheese mousses; warm oysters with cucumber and wild rice or chanterelles; foie gras with sweetcorn pancakes. The sweets are ace, the wines well chosen and inexpensive. Great classic cocktails. £50-£60. £35 at lunchtime. Lunch and dinner every day.

Treat them right

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FLORA

Variations on easy themes

Although I would not suggest serving all four of today's dishes at the same meal, I can recommend them as additions to your repertoire for entertaining. In style, the recipes have little in common:

- The potted trout is a pale, genteel Sunday treatise kind of dish.
- The grilled marinated beef, with a vibrant Latin-American flavour, is based on fajitas and is a spicy, casual dish to be served with piles of warm fresh bread, crisp cool salads, sweet and sour accompaniments and a bowl of cooked beans; this is a marvellous dish for a holiday lunch

for a large group of people.

- The muffins could be served at a late, lazy weekend breakfast or lunch.
- The roulade is so sumptuous and elegant in appearance that it makes a splendid dessert for a small spring wedding breakfast.

What the recipes do have in common is their adaptability. If smoked trout does not appeal to you, the same method can be used with cooked, smoked haddock or fresh salmon, with smoked eel or smoked

Frances Bissell, The Times
cook, suggests four recipes infinitely adaptable for your entertaining repertoire



marinated; the beef can then be cut into small strips and stir-fried for serving with crisp vegetables and a large bowl of rice. Skirt steak is one of the tastiest pieces of beef, and very lean. It is at its best when quickly grilled or fried and served rare. If you want it well done, it should be braised very slowly, with plenty of moisture.

The salsa recipe works just as well with papaya or pineapple. Unlike English muffins, which use a yeast-risen dough, American muffins are sponge-like and rise because of the raising agents in baking powder. I like the texture obtained from strong bread flour, but you can also use self-raising flour and omit the baking powder.

DANA LEADBETTER

Potted smoked trout with cucumber and horseradish relish
(serves 8-10)
3 smoked trout
6oz/170g unsalted butter at room temperature
1/2 lemon
pinch of ground mace or freshly grated nutmeg
freshly ground black pepper
4 anchovy fillets
1/2pt/70ml clarified butter for keeping
1 cucumber
1 tsp sea salt
4 spring onions
2-3 sprigs fresh mint
1 tsp grated horseradish
1/2pt/140ml thick Greek yoghurt
freshly ground black pepper
small wedge of honeydew melon (optional)

Flake the fish into a bowl, removing as many of the fine bones as possible. Beat in the butter with a fork. Grate in the lemon zest and season with lemon juice, mace or nutmeg and pepper. Pound the anchovy fillets and stir into the mixture, which should be smooth before you pack it into ramekins or a china dish. If you wish to keep the fish for a day or two, run clarified butter over the top and refrigerate. Serve with hot toast and the chilled cucumber relish.

Cucumber and horseradish relish

Split the cucumber lengthways and discard the watery core. Finely chop one half of the cucumber and grate the other half. Put in a colander, sprinkle with salt, and allow to stand for 30-40 minutes. Press all the moisture out. Trim the spring onions, and strip the mint leaves from the stems. Chop these two ingredients very finely and stir into the drained cucumber. Mix in the horseradish, yoghurt and pepper and, if you have it, the melon, chopped up, which adds a contrasting note of sweetness.

Marinated grilled beef with mango and chili salsa
(serves 6-8)
2lb/900g goose skirt beef, flank steak or the tail end of a fillet
Marinade
2 ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
4tbsp rum or tequila
4tbsp pineapple juice
4tbsp olive oil
1tbsp lemon or lime juice
2tsp Worcestershire sauce
1tsp Angostura
1/2tsp Tabasco
1/2tsp sea salt
1/2tsp freshly ground black pepper
To serve
2-3 red or green chillies
fresh coriander leaves
flour tortillas or pita bread

Mix together the marinade ingredients. Slash the meat in two or three places on each side, place in a shallow bowl and pour the marinade on top.

Leave for several hours. When ready to cook, heat the grill, remove the meat from the marinade, reserve it, and make sure that the meat is not only back at room temperature but also reasonably dry. Grill for about 5-8 minutes on each side for rare (8 minutes for medium, 10-12 minutes for well done). Remove the steak from the grill and allow to rest for 5-10 minutes before slicing it across the grain. Mix the meat with a little of the marinade. Strain the rest into a bowl, and stir in the seeded, chopped chillies. Serve this separately, and decorate the meat with sprigs of fresh coriander.

Mango and chili salsa
1 large mango
3oz/85g sulphur or dried apricots
1 green pepper, grilled, skinned, chopped and seeded
4 spring onions, trimmed and finely sliced
6tbsp golden granulated or light muscovado sugar
1/2pt/70ml white wine vinegar, rice vinegar or coconut vinegar
2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
1tsp freshly ground ginger
salt, pepper

This salsa is best made 2-3 days in advance to let the flavours mature. Peel and dice the mango quite small,

or chop it if the fruit is quite soft. Mix it with the rest of the ingredients. Put in a bowl, cover with clingfilm, and refrigerate for 2-3 days.

Dried-fruit muffins
(makes 18 or so)
approx 9oz/250g strong white organic flour (i.e. half a bag)
4tbsp baking powder
6tbsp Greek yoghurt
6tbsp sunflower or groundnut oil
3 large free-range eggs
8tbsp light muscovado sugar
4tbsp mince-meat or 8tbsp seedless raisins, or dried cranberries or dried cherries

Sift together the dry ingredients. Beat the yoghurt and oil together, and then beat in the eggs and sugar until the mixture is smooth. Stir in the mince-meat or dried fruit, and then combine wet and dry ingredients until well blended. Arrange 18 paper cases on a baking tray, and spoon in the mixture. Bake in a pre-heated oven at 200C/400F, gas mark 6 for about 20 minutes. Serve warm.

apple. Replacing the dried fruit with chopped walnuts and about 1/4oz/40g flour with an equal amount of sifted cocoa, would make very good teatime buns.

White chocolate mousse and orange flower roulade
(serves 6-8)
Sponge
generous 1/2lb/125g caster sugar
4 large free-range eggs
1tbsp orange flower water
generous 1/2lb/125g self-raising flour, sifted
1 orange
Filling
3/4oz/100g white chocolate
1tsp orange flower water
5tbsp/140ml double cream
2oz/60g unsalted butter
1 free-range egg white
To finish
icing sugar
fresh edible flowers or crystallised flowers

Preheat oven to 180C/350F, gas mark 4. Grease and line a Swiss roll tray with grease-proof paper. Put half the sugar in a padding basin set over a pan of hot water. Separate the eggs: put the whites to one side in a large bowl, and put the yolks with the sugar in the basin. Whisk this

mixture until thick and pale. This will take about five minutes, during which time you should also whisk in the orange flower water. Start whisking the egg whites, together with half the remaining sugar until peaks form. Fold in the rest of the sugar, and whisk until firm and glossy. Grate the orange zest, and mix into the egg yolks, together with the sifted flour, and then fold in the egg white mixture. Spoon into the Swiss roll tray, shaking to fill it evenly. Bake for 10-12 minutes, until just firm to the touch. Turn out flat on to a clean tea towel. Peel off the paper, and trim off the firm edges. Roll up loosely, from one of the short ends, wrapping the teatowel with it, and leave to cool while you prepare the filling.

Break the chocolate into small pieces, and put in a bowl. Bring the orange flower water and half the cream to the boil, and pour over the chocolate. Stir until the chocolate has melted, and allow to cool. When almost cool, stir in the butter. Whip the remaining cream, and separately whisk the egg white. Fold the two together, and fold into the white chocolate mixture. Unroll the sponge, and remove the tea towel. Spread the filling over the sponge and re-roll it. Place on a long platter and sift icing sugar over it. Decorate with fresh or crystallised flowers.



KIND FOOD: ALISON JOHNSON

An immoral tradition

In recent years, the Paschal Lamb has been upstaged by the chocolate egg. Nevertheless, on Easter day millions of families will sit down to roast lamb for dinner. The degree of religious devotion among the diners will vary from fervent to negligible, but all will share a comfortable certainty that on this day a lamb is the right and proper place to stick your knife and fork. Why?

The standard explanation, "because Christ who was the Lamb of God was sacrificed for us", will have non-believers chortling "Tell me another!" as they ladle on the mint sauce, and it drops believers into deep theological water.

Is Christ being eaten, in a sort of carnivorous domestic communion? Or does the tradition perpetuate a watered-down version of the animal sacrifices which the coming of Christianity swept away? Isn't it morally confused to celebrate the Resurrection after agonising death of the innocent God-man by inflicting death on an innocent animal for which no compensatory resurrection is promised?

Of course, there are no rational answers. Symbols and traditions simply gather power as they roll along, like giant snowballs. The Easter lamb and the Shrove Tuesday pancakes lose their original symbolism and acquire coster significance from the context in which they are eaten, the bosom of the family.

So far, so good. If eating a particular item at a particular season triggers family harmony and bonhomie, what does it matter if the prejudice in its favour is irrational?

But the desire to recapture those "good" feelings has sinister side effects. The Christmas turkey the centrepiece of a happy occasion, so we fasten on the turkey rather than the occasion, and want it more often, until what was the ingredient of a specific feast becomes an everyday expectation. Then, of course, it's not such a treat on its proper day, and no one enjoys it as much as expected.

That is a human problem, but the transformation of a luxury food into everyday eating is a much bigger problem for animals. Frequent consumption leads to mass production, and we expect mass-produced food to be cheap. For animals to be reared cheaply, they have to be crammed together indoors, and grown to slaughter weight unnaturally quickly. Broiler chickens and turkey are the most obvious victims of our modern demand for luxury eating every day.

Lamb has escaped the worst. Sheep are good converters of rough forage, so have never been intensified like pigs or poultry. But they aren't entirely safe. For instance, the Spanish demand for milk-fed Easter lamb, reared like veal, could lead to a taste for milk-fed lamb at other seasons, and every day, and in other countries. The only way to satisfy such a demand would be by forcing out an unnatural number of offspring from breeding animals, and rearing indoors in cramped and barren conditions.

Cultivated cookery writers

enthusiast about this exotic milk-fed Easter lamb, hastening the day when it will be in every child's cabinet. But there are many local traditions which feature less dubious goodies as part of the celebrations. My favourites are the sweet pastries from eastern countries.

Traditionally, such recipes call for butter, and plenty of it; but I sometimes cut the quantity of fat and use vegetable margarine, and the results are still very good, so even vegans can enjoy these. Filo pastry is available in larger supermarkets these days, as well as in delicatessens. The quantities given below make a festively large number of bite-size pastries. They keep in an airtight tin, and freeze well.



Baklava
Syrup
8oz/225g sugar
4oz/115g honey
12fl oz/350ml water
juice of one lemon
3cm stick cinnamon, 5 crushed cardamom pods (optional)
2tbsp rose-water
Pastry
1lb/450g filo pastry
1/2lb/225g unsalted butter, melted
Filling
8oz/225g finely chopped nuts - pistachios, walnuts, blanched almonds
1oz/30g sesame seed

Combine syrup ingredients, except rose-water. Simmer uncovered for 10 minutes. Add rose-water. Butter a tin about 20cm by 30cm and at least 3cm deep. Lay a sheet of pastry in it, brush with melted butter, fold in any edges of pastry that hang over the edge. Continue laying on sheets of pastry brushed with butter, folding in the excess from different sides, until you have about six thicknesses. Work lightly, to trap air. Scatter on a quarter of the nuts. Add another three layers of buttered pastry. Repeat twice more. Finish with up to six layers of buttered pastry, and pour over any remaining butter.

With a sharp knife, cut into diamonds. Bake for 30 minutes at 180C, then lower heat to 150C and bake for 40 minutes more. Remove, cool for ten minutes, pour cold syrup over. Serve cold.

Thirst-quenchers for the Easter holiday weekend

Warmer weather in prospect means cool drinks, Jane MacQuitty writes

You may be reading this while sleek hamsters the blossom off your fruit trees, or you may be basking in sunshine while bees buzz among the flowers. Either way, summer is imminent and the first warm days mean bringing out the deck chairs, dusting off the punchbowl and starting to prepare summer drinks.

Easter gatherings are an especially good time to practise on thirsty friends. Begin by ignoring purist barmen's advice. You do not need a battery of bar equipment and obscure

bottles of lurid, sticky liqueurs to create the best thirst-quenchers. A sharp, clean knife is essential. So, too, are the freshest of fruits, and ice cubes made with a good, still mineral water such as Evian. Alcohol, which is present in the best summer mixes, swiftly leaches out the slightest over-ripe, or rotten, flavours in the fruit, so save these for the jam instead.

Every summer my postbag is heavy with repeat orders for my Cheat's Pimm's recipe. What makes my version of this ever-popular and uniquely English gin sling so sought after is its high alcohol content and low price. Ever since Pimm's did the unspeakable of lowering the alcohol level from 31.4 per cent to 25 per cent, canny British drinkers have been making their own. Purists no doubt will continue to pay £10-plus a bottle for James Pimm's 1846 invention. The rest will follow the recipe for the classic, gin-based Pimm's No. 1 Cup below:

Cheat's Pimm's
1 measure gin
1 measure red vermouth
1 measure orange curacao such as Bols
1 slice each of orange and lemon
slices of cucumber, peel

spring of mint
sparkling lemonade

Mix the first three ingredients together in a tall glass, add the next three items together with a spring of borage, if you have any, before topping up with the chilled sparkling lemonade. Alternatively, you can use ginger ale. Few, if any, of your guests will spot the difference between Cheat's Pimm's and the real thing.

If Pimm's is Britain's idea of summer in a glass, then a daiquiri is America's. As usual with the most popular summer mixes, there are dozens of different recipes. The following is the simplest and best.

Daiquiri
2 measures light or white rum
half a lime
caster sugar to taste

Freshly squeezed lime juice is the secret behind a great daiquiri. Squeeze the juice from half a lime into a large jug, add the rum and a teaspoon or so of caster sugar to taste. Stir vigorously until the sugar has fully dissolved before adding crushed ice. Stir gently and strain into a frosted cocktail glass. Frosted glasses, look professional and need no more than an hour or two in the coolest part of your fridge

— not freezer — to turn cloudy with cold.

Part of the pleasure of serving summery mixed drinks lies in the preparation. I am a great fan of summer punches at large gatherings, and most are better for several hours' maceration before serving. Don't worry if you have not got a fancy punchbowl; any large mixing bowl will do. (Always do your guests a favour by having non-alcoholic drinks available, too.)

Fish House punch
serves 15 generously
1/2pt peach brandy
1/2pt dark rum
1/2pt brandy
juice of six lemons
6 peaches, washed and thickly sliced
caster sugar to taste
3pt chilled sparkling mineral water, or soda water

Dissolve the caster sugar (at least two tablespoons) by combining with the freshly squeezed lemon juice and stirring hard. Pour into the bottom of a large punchbowl, add the remaining ingredients, apart from the water, together with a large block of ice. Stir occasionally.

Just before your guests arrive, add the chilled sparkling water and stir again. Weaken the punch, if necessary, by adding extra bottles of water, strengthen it by topping up with peach brandy.



Fruit, fizz and a generous nip: perfect for get-togethers

BEST BUYS

● 1991 Taurus Valley Gisborne Dry White. Safeway £3.94
Not a great New Zealand white, but this crisp, zesty, herbaceous miller thurgau, albeit a touch bland, made by Villa Maria, shows some of this grape's NZ potential. Should be cheaper.

● 1991 Chateau de Sours Bordeaux Rose Corney & Barrow, 12 Helmet Row, EC1, £5.50. Majestic £5.29
Celebrate the first warm days of spring with this delicious deep cherry pink merlot-dominated rose, with its rich cassis scent and blackcurrant palate.

● Derris Marlborough. Cuvée: Oddbins £9.99, Hunters, Crown Road.

Twickenham £10.95, Tesco £10.04
Last chance to buy Derris before new stocks arrive in May. This fresh, creamy, toasty-malty New Zealand marmalade champagne sparkle has plenty of tip-top pinot noir and chardonnay fruit to give balance.

One step down on rioja's age and quality scale from the Gran Reservas and one step up from the crianza level, Muga's floral, tobacco-redolent style is backed up by ripe, chocolatey fruit and made by a small, traditional Rioja bodega.

ASK NOT HOW MUCH MARMALADE CAN YOU GET FROM THESE ORANGES, ASK HOW MANY ORANGES



The Essex Weekly News, February 13th 1925:
"For ordinary marmalade the object is to produce the largest amount of marmalade from a given quantity of oranges, but at Tiptree this process is reversed and the object there is to see how many oranges can be concentrated in one pot of marmalade. By the latest process employed it is found possible to concentrate the flavour of double the usual number of oranges into the same weight of marmalade."

We've had the same attitude for over 100 years, and not just to our marmalade. The headline might as easily read: "Ask not how much jam can you get from these strawberries (plums, damsons etc.). Ask how many strawberries (plums, damsons etc.) can you get into this jar."



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Junior four-wheel drive

Young roller-skaters are all set for next week's competitions, Jane Bidder writes

Next weekend nearly 150 children will flock to Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, and start getting their skates on. The occasion, at the Rollerbury Rink, is the Primary Roller Skating Championships (for ten to 13-year-olds) and the novice event (beginners of any age).

Some hopefuls, such as ten-year-old John Kell, from County Durham, who began roller-skating when he was aged four and went on to become the British novice champion two years ago, are almost as much accustomed to being on wheels as they are to walking.

John caught the bug from his sister Sheryl, aged 15, who first tried roller-skating at a rink during a family caravanning holiday and has hardly taken her skates off since. Now Sheryl, another sister, Caroline, aged 13, and John train for four hours five days a week.

The Kells are not unusual. According to the British Federation of Roller Skating an increasing number of children, from the age of three, are taking up the sport, together with many a game parent who rediscovers the joy of skating along to lively background music and peals of laughter.

The advent of roller-blades, which look like ice skates with wheels along a thin central blade, has added a frisson of trendiness to the pastime, although as yet few rinks rent them and they cannot be used in competition.

Britain has seven purpose-built rinks - the one at Bury St Edmunds is among the largest. But there are also smaller rinks which are part of sports/leisure centres, and a few on resort seafrofts.

Graham Cubitt, a freelance coach, says skating is an excellent hobby for young children, providing they can walk reasonably well and have good balance. "Because they're still low to the ground, it's not so serious if they fall. It's also good exercise for strengthening leg muscles." Parents, warns Mr Cubitt, should be more careful. "Their bones are more brittle and they are less used to falling over than a toddler. I've seen some adults end up in plaster."

Nevertheless, one of the attractions of roller-skating is that the whole family can join in, and what child does not relish seeing mum or dad take a harmless fall? Although Susan Kell is "too scared" to join in,



Gliding confidence: competitive sisters Jenna Guest, aged seven, and Samantha, 11, who finds the sport is good for her arthritis

her husband John has on occasion joined his children on roller-skating disco afternoons.

Most junior skaters start off for pleasure but then get drawn to the competitive side of the sport. Jenna Guest and her sister, Samantha, started skating three years ago when they were four and eight years old respectively. "Samantha has arthritis in her knee and the consultant suggested that roller-skating might help," her mother, Janet, says.

The Guests went to their local rink near Walsall, West Midlands, and discovered that included in the session fee were the services of a coach. From then on, there was no stopping the sisters. "The coach helped them take grades 1-6, which included basic dance steps and jumps," Mrs Guest says. "By grade six, they knew enough to do a two-minute free-skating programme. We began to pay extra for coaching

[about £3 an hour for a group of four] and entered competitions."

The children's competition structure is daunting. From May 2-8 there are the youth championships (for 12 to 13-year-olds) at Leicester, and from May 24-25, the junior championships (ages 14-15) at Bridgend, South Wales.

Winning is not everything. "Roller-skating has taught my daughters to move more gracefully. It has improved Jenna's posture," Mrs Guest says, "and helped Samantha's arthritis, although she still finds certain moves difficult."

Samantha says she enjoys "showing off and feeling the air rush through my hair as I skate along". She also likes to design her own outfits, which are then made by a friend of her mother. Less serious skaters wear track suits.

Although Samantha, like John Kell, will be trying her luck at next weekend's Primary Championships, there are others who have had a head start. Eight-year-old Natalie Ford, from London, started skating at only two years old, and recently won the Seven and Under Roller-Skating Championship of Great Britain.

Natalie was "discovered" by Mr Cubitt. "I saw immediately that she had great flair, coupled with confidence and grace," he says. Now Natalie travels to Great Yarmouth every weekend, with her mother, Antonia, for specialist coaching. "It's a great opportunity for her," Mrs Ford says. "And even if she doesn't turn professional, it's a wonderful hobby which has helped her travel, meet other children and increased her confidence."

For children who do not want to enter competitions, roller-skating can still be a lot of fun, and is

reasonably inexpensive. Sessions generally cost about £2-£3 an hour, which, according to the rink, include the cost of hiring the skates. Buying skates can be costly (a pair good enough for competitions costs about £200), though most rinks have secondhand skates for sale.

Seeing what fun roller-skating can be is almost enough to make me take my three children to our nearest rink at Milton Keynes, in Buckinghamshire. But one little incident has put me off: a friend (another mother of three) got so carried away watching her graceful six-year-old that she tried to copy what looked like a simple routine. Her leg, the doctor says, should be out of plaster in six weeks.

For details of your nearest roller rink and any other skating information, contact the British Federation of Roller Skating, Lilleshall National Sports Centre, near Newport, Shropshire TF10 9AT (0952 825253).

Easter holiday events

LONDON

□ Battersea parade: Big annual celebration supported by arena events, entertainments and a fun-fair. Battersea Park, SW11. Tomorrow, noon-6.30pm. Free.

□ Zoo special: Many events, based on Peter Rabbit, including competition trails with badges and prizes, colouring sheets and story-telling. London Zoo, Regents Park, NW1. Mon-Fri, 10am-5.30pm. £5.60, child £3.50.

□ Kite festival: Individual, team, stunt and fighting kite displays, parachuting teddy bears, and a competition today. Blackheath, SE3. Today, tomorrow, Mon, 10am-5pm. Free.

□ Victoria & Albert sights: Events include introductory tours of the museum for seven to 11-year-olds accompanied by an adult. V&A, Cromwell Road, SW7. (071-938 8500). Wed 22-Sat 25, 2.30pm. Meet main entrance. Free.

□ Harness horse parade: Fine array of working horses and turnouts with grand parade and winners at noon. Inner Circle, Regents Park, NW1. Mon, judging and parades from 9.30am. Free.

□ Piazza pleasure: Fun-fair, treasure hunt with prizes, face-painting, clowns, and egg-and-spoon races. Covent Garden, WC2. (071-836 9156). Today, tomorrow, Mon, 10am-6pm. Free.

□ Railway 92: Five model railway layouts for children to operate. RHS Halls, Greycoat Street and Vincent Square, SW1. Today, tomorrow, Mon, Wed, 10.30am-6pm; Tues 10.30am-8pm. £6, child £3, family ticket £15. Book on 071-833 1840.

□ Egg hunt: All contestants receive small presents from the Easter bunny, plus a draw with prizes for the winners in three age groups. London Transport Museum, Covent Garden, WC2. (071-379 6344). Daily until April 26, 10am-6pm, last admission 5.15pm. £3.20, child 5-16, £1.50, under fives free, family ticket £7.50.

NATIONWIDE

□ Armadillo games: Question and answer egg hunt with small prizes. Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Mill Road, Arundel, West Sussex (BN15 2JL). Today, tomorrow, Mon, 10.30am-6.30pm. Last admission 5.30pm. £3.50, child £1.75 plus 25p quiz sheet.

□ Belting in the air: Tethered hot air balloon rides, treasure hunt, clowns and funfair. Widdowood Farm, Belting, Pudding Wood, Kent (ME22 7JZ). Tomorrow, Mon, 10am-6pm. £4.25, child 5-15 £3, under fives free.

□ Billingham folk: Take a hard-boiled egg to decorate and join in traditional egg rolling. Billingham Beck Valley Ecology Park, Cleveland (0642 530784). Mon 10am-noon, 20p.

□ Bursledon craft: Watch wood-carvers creating farm animals, help in the farm kitchen, decorate an egg and see new lambs and piglets. Manor Farm, Upper Hamble

Country Park, Bursledon, Hants (0489 787055). Today, tomorrow, Mon, 10am-5.30pm. £2.20, child £1.20, family £6.40.

□ Framlingham play: A condensed family version of The Tempest. Framlingham Castle, Suffolk. (0728 724189). Mon 2pm and 4pm. £2.50, child £1.

□ Glastonbury rarities: Holiday quiz with prizes until April 23. On Monday, baby rare breeds. Somerset Rural Life Museum, Abbey Farm, Glastonbury, Somerset. (0458 831197). Weekends, 2-4pm. Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm. £1.20, child 30p.

□ Goodrich tales: Medieval English stories for six to 12-year-olds. Goodrich Castle, near Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire (0600 890538). Mon 2pm, 3pm, 4pm. £1.50, child 75p.

□ Upper Dicker do: More than 4,000 eggs to be found hidden



Eggstravaganza: join a hunt

somewhere in the grounds with hunt for various ages. Michelham Priory, Upper Dicker, East Sussex (0323 844224). Tomorrow from noon. £1.50.

□ Kewford fun: Craft fair and ducklings, lambs and other animals, plus shire horse cart rides, music with a fairground organ and children's play area. Taton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire (0565 654822). Today, tomorrow, Mon, 10.30am-4.30pm. £1.70, child £1.20, cars £2.

□ Sandling search: Country craft demonstrations and a cut-out chicken hunt with small prizes. Museum of Kent Life, Sandling, Kent (0622 763936). Today, tomorrow, Mon, 11am-5pm. £2.40, child £1.20.

□ Stowmarket life: Lambs, chicks and rabbits, and on Monday blacksmith demonstrations. Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, Suffolk (0449 612229). Tomorrow, Mon 10am-5pm. £3.25, child three-16 £1.60, under threes free, family ticket £9.

□ Wakefield bonnets: Egg hunt with prizes for under 16s. Plus an Easter bonnet competition. Yorkshire Mining Museum, Capheaton Colliery, Overton, Wakefield, West Yorkshire (0924 848806). Tomorrow 10am-5pm. £4.75, child £3.90.

JUDY FROSHAUG

071-481 1920

SATURDAY RENDEZVOUS

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Aspects of love in the potato field make my heart race

FARMER'S DIARY: PAUL HEINEY

I never thought it possible that such a distinguished countryman's journal as *The Field* would publish photographs of a titillating and arousing nature. However, a few weeks ago, I opened my copy to find a picture which would send any aspiring vintage farmer, like me, to the cold shower.

It was a photograph of a man with a pair of horses, drawing ridges of earth with his plough. By inspired use of lenses and landscape the photographer had miniaturised the man and his team to give the effect of a Lilliputian ploughing between rows of newly ironed corduroy.

But it was not the farmer, nor his horses which kindled lustful thoughts within me. It was the furrows. Kinky they were not, but almost obscenely straight. They headed to the horizon with no hint of a meander, no suggestion of a

wobble from the straight and narrow. They were perfectly formed, lying seductively across the land, inviting caress. My heart raced.

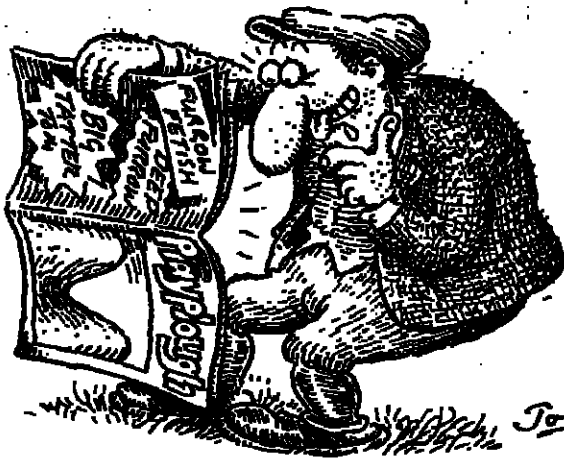
I was hardly into my farming-with-horses career when I discovered the tantalising nature of the straight line. All jobs in every field on this farm start with a single furrow, alongside which all other furrows will lie. If the furrows wobble, so will the seed drill when it sows the corn, and then the horse-drawn hoe will not be able to follow it because the hoe and the horse both work in straight lines. Even when it is a job where straightness is of no particular virtue, like rolling, it is inadvisable to let one's standards drop; you can bet there will be some old boy



leaning over the gate, watching. He may not say anything at the time but sooner or later word will reach me that "ol' Charlie thought I wuz in a right muddle".

In the days when all farms were worked with horses, it was considered a horse-man's legitimate recreation to stroll the lanes on a Sunday, peering over the hedges, noting the deficiencies in someone else's work. Each wobble was hauled out in evidence that night in the pub to shame the man who let his attention and his horses momentarily wander.

Only practice can make perfect, but the snag with rehearsing is that it all has to be done in public and it is irreversible. If I draw a furrow which rolls like the proverbial



English road, I cannot fix a sign to it saying: "Sorry, only done for practice." Nor can I cover it up; it is too deep and permanent. That is the reason my heart pounds when I call to the horses "Gup" and cut

the initial furrow in a field. This week it has pounded a lot. I have been drawing ridges into which I planted potatoes and it is exactly the same operation as was being performed by the farmer in

that stimulating picture. But I fear that at the end of the day not even a trick photographer could have created such a powerful impression out of my pathetic efforts.

I use a ridging plough, known hereabouts as a "tater tom". It is similar to an ordinary plough but throws the earth to both sides leaving a V-shaped furrow. It is into that furrow you drop the seed potatoes, and then plough the length of the ridge to throw the soil back whence it came. This not only covers the potato, it leaves a ridge of earth above it into which the young potatoes grow. If you find this difficult to follow, imagine what it is like to perform.

The first drawing of the furrows is easy, and even the dropping of the potatoes becomes pleasant if you do not allow your mind to dwell on the tedium of it. I once heard of an old horseman who, when asked what occupied his mind as he

worked alone in the fields, replied with a twinkling eye: "Same as any young man thinks about when he's on his own for long enough." Me, I thought of that photograph, and lusted after the earthy mounds.

But when the climax came and I set the plough to create my mounds, my orderly field of spuds became a battleground. My tater tom wandered hazily, like a besotted schoolboy overcome with his first thoughts of love. I wept, heartbroken. I cursed the plough, the horses and spuds. Love turned to hate. Such beauty, I realise, is found only in the pages of tantalising magazines and is beyond the reach of this common man.

I do not want to live through such an unsettling experience again. The next time I am in the local paper shop I shall ask the newsagent to move *The Field* to the top shelf, well out of reach of this impressionable youngster.

Hazards of a happy cleric

The Rev John Hawthorne on the annual ups and downs of delivering the Easter message

Seamus, despite his name, was born in England. "But," he explained to a friend when he was aged five, "I was conceived in Ireland." And so he probably was — just I am not very good at that sort of arithmetic. The context of their conversation I don't know. Perhaps it is just as well.

Now aged 20, he is our youngest son, followed only by 12-year-old Phoebe. He still has his odd moments. For my birthday, rather than the expected bus pass to celebrate my advanced age, he sought to flatter my intellect, buying me Bruce Duffy's *The World As I Found It*. It is a typical American first novel — layered writings, as my wife would describe it. Covering some 40 years and two world wars, Duffy juxtaposes the lives, loves and philosophies of Ludwig Wittgenstein, G.E. Moore and Bertrand Russell.

Seamus is a good present buyer, mixing generosity and economy. The Christmas before last he gave me a brass button and an IOU for a cope. The button I still have — as well as the IOU. The cope has yet to come. Seamus takes after Seth, his eldest brother. Seth's present to the family, a few years ago, was a pack of eight identical cards — one each, "It's the thought that counts," he said.

But back to Duffy. At one point he has Russell speaking of the difficulty facing the writer who, in the course of his writing, has to give expression to feelings that have long since gone. As a priest, I sympathise. Often I have to write of, and create a vehicle for, emotions yet to be felt. Easter is an example; and there are hazards.

Some years ago I wrote and recorded, as early as January, a half-hour programme to be broadcast in Holy Week. Unfortunately, the producer forgot to remove an edit. And there, on Good Friday, in the middle of my solemn and serious meditation, came the words which I thought were never heard outside *It'll Be Alright on the Night*: "Sorry, let me do that bit again." My most heartfelt prayer that Good Friday was to thank God that that was all I had said.

The days leading up to Easter are ones of great and constantly changing drama. Moods change with the speed of a tropical storm. Joy, agony, elation, despair and celebration trip over each other. Sermons, seemingly by the dozen, each picking up a

different mood, have to be prepared in advance of the mood. "This year, I felt rather like John Major," Neil Kinnock and Paddy Ashdown rolled into one — on the stump, waiting for polling day.

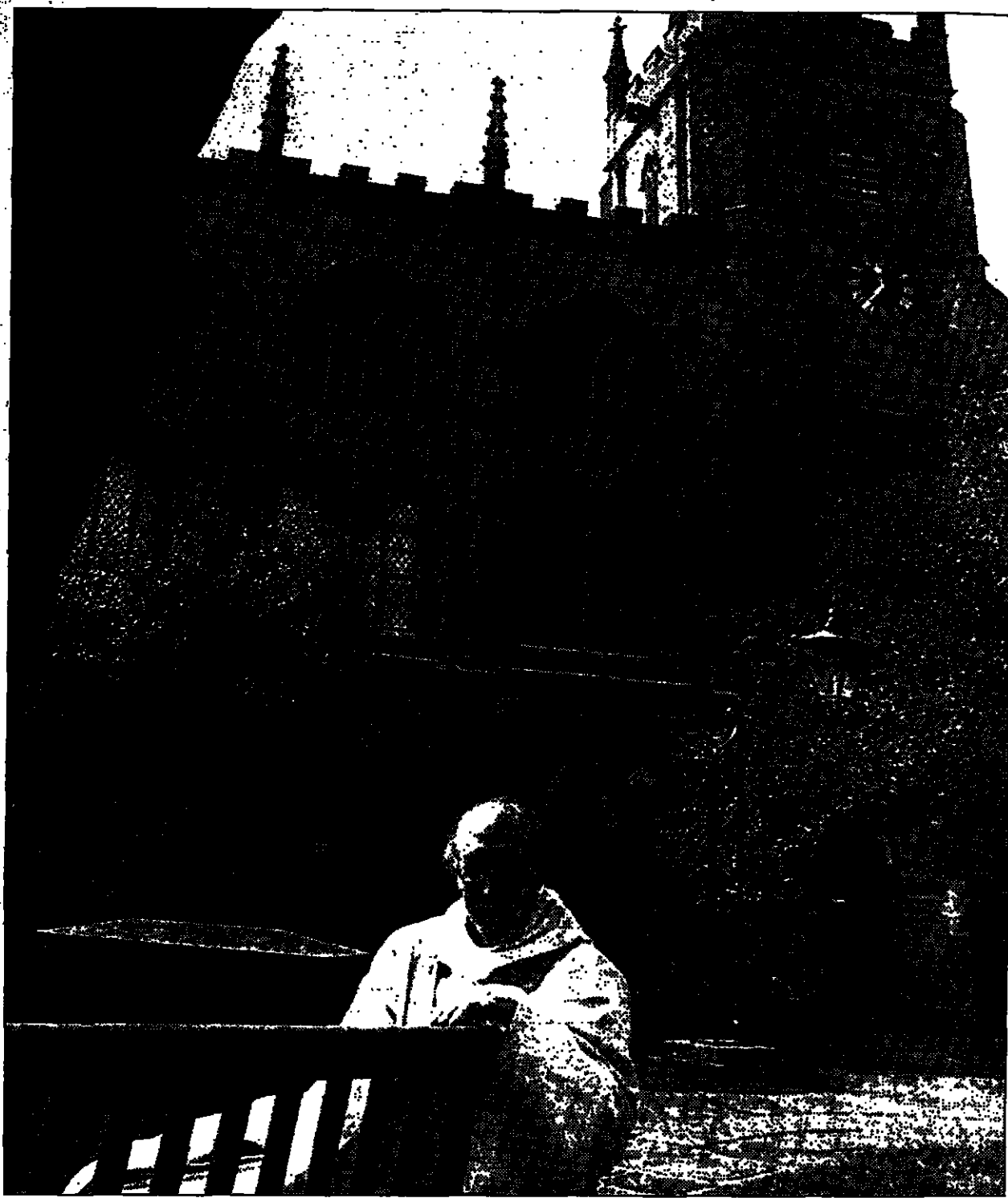
Yesterday was a black day, a day beloved of church treasurers who can gloat over a darkened church with no lights left burning. It is also a day hated by the flower ladies, who, always wanting to "get things done", are upset when they can't. "No, I'm sorry, Joan, you can't bring the Easter lilies into church today. No, not even to hide them in the pulpit... He may have let you leave them there, I know. You told me last year. But I'm not the last vicar; I'm sorry, I'm me. Yes, Joan, all these services probably do get in the way of the people who are trying to work in the church to make it look nice for the visitors... Why don't you just stop for a few minutes and join in? Oh, that's a shame. You haven't got time for things like that, what with the shopping and cooking and all the family home — I'm sure you'll manage somehow... And the church will look lovely on Sunday."

And, of course, it will. Today, Easter Eve, is the day of preparation. It's a sort of limbo day. It was like that for the first disciples, too. It is a day of anticipation. After early morning matins, I won't dare set foot in the church until late this afternoon, by which time I hope all the hassle will be over. Last year I went in at lunchtime, knocked over a flower pedestal that was just inside the door and then stood on the Easter Garden, which had been left in my vestry for safety. I learnt my lesson.

Tomorrow — Easter Day — makes it all worthwhile. I have always loved Easter, even as a child. My mother used to put coquina in the water when she boiled the breakfast eggs. They were such a pretty pink I never wanted to crack them.

Of course, had it not been for that first Easter Day, I should now have no job, or certainly it would be something very different. No Resurrection — no church. Christianity is about Easter, not Christmas. Light, not darkness. The church will be full; the pews streaked with chocolate, as dozens of tiny fingers are wiped along them. The choir will be in full voice and I shall, once more, preach the triumphant Easter message.

For a moment, as I stand at the door



John Hawthorne prepares for the big day: "the church will be full, pews streaked with chocolate from tiny fingers"

after the service, I shall allow myself to dream. But not for long. "Lovely service, vicar. See you at harvest." Not for nothing is next Sunday called Low Sunday.

● The Reverend John Hawthorne is the vicar of Tetbury, Gloucestershire. He will be writing an occasional column for the *Out of Town* page.

Feather report

Crackdown on egg robbers

Easter and eggs: naturally these things go together in the season of new life. It is peak time for the birds, it is also the peak time for the extraordinary and destructive sub-culture of egg-collecting. Easter and eggs also, alas, go together. They have already robbed a golden eagle nest this year.

The rarer the bird, the more vulnerable it is to direct persecution, such as egg-collecting. Of course, the rarer the bird, the more the egg robbers long to persecute it.

We are not talking about rare birds that turn up for a fleeting moment and delight the twitching fraternity. Obviously, the only birds an egg collector can persecute are breeding birds. Top of the list are birds of prey, still struggling to recover from the problems they suffered before DDT was made illegal in 1982.

Red kite is one of the egg robbers' favourite targets: six kite nests were robbed last year, making 63 nest robberies in the past 11 years. In 1990, robberies included nine osprey nests, nine red kite, 13 peregrine, four merlin, three golden eagle, three dotterel, two goshawk and two hen harrier.

Research by the RSPB shows that the egg robbers are having an effect on the species they rob: the recovery rate is slowed by the relentless activity of the egg robbers. Egg robbers can be fined up to £2,000 an egg, and have treasured collections confiscated. The RSPB works



The prize: but takers can be fined up to £2,000 an egg

hard to bring prosecutions: this keeps the egg robbers rate of increase under control. They are easy people to hate: it is transparent wickedness. They are the easiest hate targets in conservation, and having them offend nobody.

Richard Porter, the head of the RSPB investigations section, says that many of the egg robbers he has prosecuted "were very nice people. I got to know and like them. They are not the out-and-out rogues you find in some areas: crooked pet-shop owners, importers, taxidermists. They are not doing it for profit."

The mere possession of the egg is not the thrill: it is the chase. Mr Porter told me about an egg he had nabbed, who boasted: "I have never been beaten by a nest." He

Some egg robbers are good field naturalists: all are, to an extent, spoilt conservationists. They do much damage, and the RSPB spends a lot of time and money stopping them, so that the law can be enforced.

A couple of points for consideration: is it not odd that enforcement of the law of the land requires so much physical and financial help of a charity? Certainly the RSPB would prefer to spend its hard-earned cash elsewhere, and leave law enforcement to the appropriate bodies.

At least the law for prosecuting egg robbers exists. But the law does not so readily turn its might on every enemy of conservation: the despoilers, not of single nests, but of vast tracts of countryside; the developers, the poisoners, the polluters, the agricultural policy-makers, the money-makers.

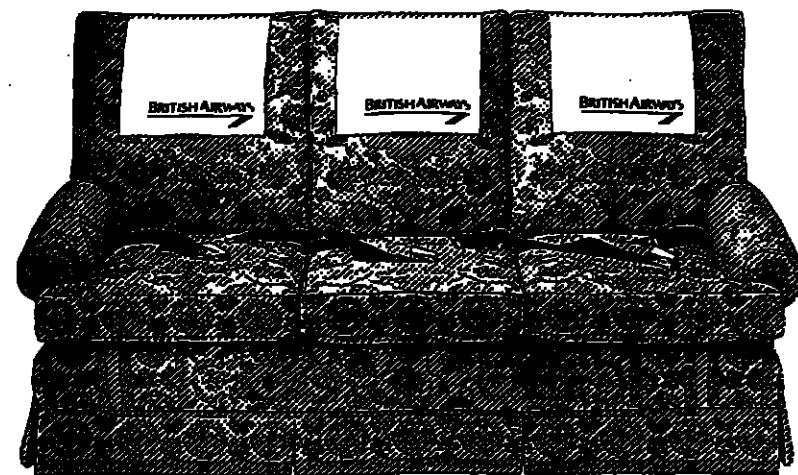
The old rhyme has a new twist today: an Easter message if ever there was one.

*They hang the man and flog the woman
Who steals the goose from off the common,
But let the greater criminal loose
Who steals the common from the goose.*

SIMON BARNES

● What's about: Birders — watch for willow warblers. Twitchers — two adult Bonaparte's gulls at Plymouth Hoe, and hoopoe at Exminster, Devon. Little Bunting at Freshman Ponds, Surrey. Details from *Birdline*, 0898 700222.

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* WHERE TO EAT *



Sophistication with great views: Sir Terence Conran's Pont de la Tour brasserie

THERE is no catering within the Tower but exit passes are given for the self-service restaurant and snack bar on Tower Wharf which is designated The Kitchen, HM Tower of London, and serves standard fare.

● For culinary excitement, cross Tower Bridge to Le Pont de la Tour, in the Butler's Wharf building at 36 D. Shad Thames. This is Sir Terence Conran's sophisticated brasserie with a 150ft river frontage, seats for 65 in the bar and grill, 100 in the restaurant, and shortly another 100 on the terrace. It is usually full and the cooks work hard to keep pace, dishing out excellent *plateaux de fruits de mer* and food in a bewildering variety of styles — even fish and chips. Bar: £20 for three courses. Restaurant: set lunch £21.50, dinner £35 plus 15 per cent service (last orders midnight) (071-403 8403).

● About 100 yards further east there is another stylish Conran offering, again with views of the Tower, bridge and river. The Blueprint Café in the Design Museum, Butler's Wharf, specialises in

simple, sunny cuisine of mixed Mediterranean and Californian origins. Reckon about £27 a head (071-378 7031).

● In St Katherine's Way, beside the World Trade Centre just up the hill from the Tower Thistle Hotel, the Vineyard is one of a chain of London wine bars serving fish, steaks and puddings. Bills are about £20 a head (071-490 6680).

● A sophisticated newcomer is the marble-floored and air-conditioned Minister Pavement Café Bar, off Mincing Lane. A Richardson's Inn, it serves a City clientele with breakfasts from 7am, and quick bites, steaks and chef's specials through the day. Attractions include fountains, magicians, jazz, and disco and karaoke evenings.

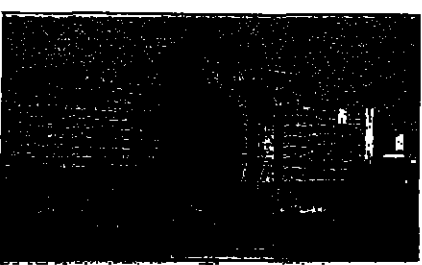
● Other restaurants close to the Tower are The Broker wine bar on the north side of Tower Hill (071-488 0131) and a branch of the Wheeler's seafood chain at the Tower end of Great Tower Street (071-626 3685). There is a McDonald's in the Tower Hill Pageant complex.

* WHERE TO STAY *

The most convenient hotel for the Tower is the modern, 800-room Tower Thistle Hotel (071-481 2575), just below Tower Bridge and directly accessible along the river bank from Tower Wharf. It overlooks the Thames on one side and St Katherine's Dock on the other. Single rooms are £119, double or twin £135, and suites from £260, all excluding breakfast. Discounts are offered for short breaks through Highlife Value Breaks on 0800 700400.

The Savoy, in the Strand, has just celebrated its centenary but remains the classiest of London's grand hotels. A room without the river view does not cost as much as at some of the other hotels. Singles are £185, twin/doubles £210 (£280 overlooking the river) and suites from £305 to £645, all excluding breakfast. At weekends there are special programmes including dinner and champagne, or wine and breakfast at £210-£290 for the first night and £200 for additional nights, but the supplement for river rooms is £65 a night (071-836 4343).

At the 137-room Howard, a quiet and modern hotel, there is no price difference in the standard rooms whether they have



Tower Hotel: short walk to the tower

river or garden views. Single £200, twin/double £226, junior suite £245, studio suite £270 and penthouse suites £465, all including breakfast. The weekend rate for a double room is £138 (071-836 3555).

Convenient for river boats from Charing Cross Pier to the Tower (or the District and Circle lines to Tower Hill) is the Royal Horseguards Thistle Hotel (071-839 3400), Whitehall Court, which has a few rooms with river views. Singles £99-£145, twin/doubles £110-£165, studio suites £185-£200. For short-term offers, ring Highlife Value Breaks on 0800 700400.



THE TOWER OF LONDON

Robin Young urges more Britons to enjoy the horrors and highlights of our most authentic tourist attraction

The Tower of London is Britain's top-grossing tourist attraction, yet grossly undervalued by Britons themselves. More than three quarters of the 2.75 million visitors who annually pay for admission (adults £6) come from abroad. A straw poll conducted outside Tower Hill station suggests that an even higher proportion of our own commuters who pass the place every day have never been inside. Most of the one-tenth or so who had were last there as children.

The summer queues winding around the moat garden terrace are no doubt a disincentive, but there is still time to beat them. At the ticket kiosk a notice warns how much longer you will have to queue once inside if you wish to see the crown jewels — 30 minutes, 60 minutes, 90 minutes or more.

Most days this month, though, there will probably be no queue to gawp at the jewels in their basement strongroom. To speed the flow the authorities have introduced a two-tier viewing system. Standing and staring is permitted for those on the outside, higher track, but not for those below, who are closest to the glass display cases. After one circuit you can transfer to the other level to go round again. Considering that the Imperial Crown of India alone contains 6,004 precious stones, that there are another 3,737 in the Imperial State Crown, and that you have still to look for the Koh-i-noor



Tours of duty: Beefeaters make perfect guides

diamond in the Maltese cross at the front of the Queen Mother's crown, you will probably want to go round the second time. Do not ask what the jewels are worth. Nobody knows.

You may well, even at this time of year, have to stand in line with sado-masochistically inclined tourists and family parties if you want to have your flesh crawl at the display of instruments of punishment and torture in the Lower Martin Tower. Pride of place goes to the "Duke of Exeter's daughter", the rack named after the 15th-century Constable of the Tower, who imported it from France to pull victims limb from limb, and to its equally hideous opposite number, the "Scavenger's Daughter" or "Skeffington Irons", which constricted victims to death. Here also is the chopping block on which, in 1747, the Jacobite Lord Lovat became the last man to be beheaded in Britain.

This is the London Dungeon, Chamber of Horrors and Garrards and Aspreys all rolled into one and then outdone several times over. You are in the world's most fabulous, yet most authentic, theme park, handed down to us ready-made by centuries of use and tradition. The theme is history.

Not the dry, academic and dusty history of politicians, documents and diplomacy, but the vicious, brutal and all-engaging history of the clash of arms and death of kings, of riot, murder, torture and execution, of vast wealth, vaulting ambitions and pathetic ends. This is a place to stir the imagination, fire the blood, and a moment later make it run cold.

You have read about it in books, heard it celebrated in song and proverb, and seen it in Shakespeare's plays, on the television in BBC drama series, and in the films. Now walk the walls that warders paced, feel

the stones which prisoners scratched, and examine the armaments which dispatched your country's enemies, and probably some of your ancestors as well. £6? Frankly, it's a bargain.

The Tower was always intended to be a terrifying place. William the Conqueror, his biographer tells us, thought it was "of the first importance to overawe the Londoners". To that end, when he started building on the site of his original hasty, wooden fortifications within the Roman city walls, he imported the shining white stone from Caen in Normandy to edge the corners and pick out the window openings of his magnificent keep, the White Tower. At 90ft, it was the tallest building in London at the time, a fortress-palace and an awesome symbol of William's military might.

It is full now of the arms and armour of later centuries, but in the chapel of St John the Evangelist, on the first and second floors, we have the shrine which victorious William raised to his God of Battles. Stockily compact and sturdy, unornamented and obdurate, it brings the conqueror as close to us as most would probably wish to have him.

Almost as soon as the White Tower was complete it became a prison, and almost as soon as it became a prison escapes began. The Tower of London is Britain's Colditz. The first prisoner we know of, Ranulf Flambard, Bishop of Durham, locked up by Henry I in 1100, wine and dined his guards so lavishly that they became senseless, and then climbed out of a window and down a rope which had been smuggled to him in a wine cask. He lived to be forgiven. In 1244, the Welsh prince Gruffydd ap Ilewelyn, a prisoner of Henry III, was not so lucky. His rope of knotted bed sheets came apart, and he plunged to his death.



Better than the classroom: experience centuries of history

Since the days of Elizabeth, the White Tower has been principally used as a military storehouse. Now it displays part of the vast national collection of arms and armour in the care of the Royal Armouries. Modern theme-park designers would have had nothing to tell the Stuart entrepreneurs about what brings in the gate money. The Armouries' earliest attractions were the Line of Kings, figures of English monarchs with carved and painted

heads, in armour and on horseback, and weapons and tools and implements allegedly captured from the Spanish Armada. Spectacular and bloodcurdling though they seemed, they were full of anachronisms. William the Conqueror rode a mule, although he was dead centuries before firearms were invented, and none of the Spanish Armory had ever been aboard a Spanish galleon. Almost all of it was of later date and from other countries.

Now both the remnant fragments of the Line of Kings and the ferocious blood-letting gadgetry of the Spanish Armory are still on view, authentic testimony to showmen's centuries-old chicanery.

But there are rivetingly dreadful armours on display, too, none more formidably suggestive of their former owner than those made for Henry VIII. Henry in his Green and garnitures for tourney, field and foot combat — all solid steel — would have made Robo-Cop look skimpily under-dressed.

When the Armouries were first opened to the public world got round that infertile women might conceive if they stuck a pin in King Harry's codpiece. An Archbishop of Canterbury had it hidden away as too gross an incitement to superstition and ribaldry.

Arms and armour are eloquent, but in the Tower even stones speak. More than 400 inscriptions have been found

Within these walls: feel the stones which prisoners scratched



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Develop an island

If you yearn for the lonely sea and the sky, these seven beautiful, away-from-it-all islands

the Court of Chief Pleas. Living in a timewarp, it recognises no divorce law, in order to maintain the centuries old laws of inheritance.

The high cliffs of Sark's coastal scenery provide spectacular walks. Accommodation varies from two or three comfortable hotels to simple B&B.

To get there, you can fly to nearby Guernsey, then take a 40-minute journey by launch to Sark, where a tractor-drawn bus meets boats. There are no cars, but cycles and horse-drawn carriages can be hired. (Details from Tourism Information Office, 0481 832345.)

● St Agnes, Isles of Scilly: Of the five inhabited islands which lie 28 miles southwest of Land's End, this is the least influenced by tourism. The population is

about 60: there are a few guesthouses and one pub, the Turk's Head. The island measures about one and a quarter miles by a quarter of a mile, and has a separate island, Gugh, which has neolithic remains and is linked at low tide by a sandbar. The islanders fish and farm; visitors are a sideline.

The other small islands in the group are Bryher, St Martin and Treco, which has its own heliport. To get there, fly or take a boat to the main island, St Mary's, then on by launch about 15 minutes. (Details from Isles of Scilly Tourism Office, 0720 22536.)

● Lundy, Bristol Channel: This is leased to the Landmark Trust, which preserves historic buildings and lets them for holidays. A castle keep (built by

This weekend, Holy Island in the Firth of Clyde will regain its heritage as a religious retreat. The Tibetan Buddhist community at Eskdalemuir, which has been fundraising to get the £350,000 needed to buy the island, will celebrate the purchase and begin work on turning the island into an interdenominational haven.

The island was once the home of St Molios, an Irish missionary who lived in a cave during the 6th century.

The four lighthouse keepers' cottages and outbuildings are to be converted to house those on retreat and should be ready later this year.

A number of the islands around Britain have a spiritual history, originating in the dark ages when they provided sanctuaries for religious orders from the dangers of the mainland. The islands still exert their fascination as a means of getting away — but this time from modern living.

There is something about crossing the water, even if it's only 20 minutes on the Isle of



ROS DRINKWATER

the instruments of torture, the jewels and the armaments which dispatched this country's enemies, and probably some of our ancestors as well



any might: stone from Caen edges the corners of the 90ft White Tower, a mark of William the Conqueror's power

into the Tower walls by and warders alike. In the most poignant are carvings of faith carved who fell off the Tudors' back into Tower

collection, none more ornate than that by John Dudley showing the Warwick bear and ragged staff with the Dudley's lion with two tails, and a frieze of flowers to represent the four brothers who were imprisoned with the sculptor.

The Dudleys were imprisoned in 1553 after the failure of their father's attempt to place the 16-year-old Lady Jane Grey on the throne. Guilford, who, aged 19, was Jane's husband, was executed outside the Tower

in front of the mob while she was decapitated in Tower Green.

I have no need to conduct you round the Tower. Since the place has more than 20 towers, two chapels, the Stuart New Armouries, the Royal Fusiliers museum, and the Queen's House built for Anne Boleyn, who was then put to death on the lawn outside, it is just as well.

But I am relieved of the duty because the Tower has guides

like no others. The Yeoman Warders have guarded the royal palace since the 11th century. Theirs is the longest continuous history of any armed force in the world, and they must still qualify for the honour with 22 years' service as warrant officers in the army, Royal Marines or RAF, and with a recommendation from their commanding officer.

There are 42 of them, living in the Tower and intensely proud of it. None has more

onerous responsibility than the Yeoman Raven Master. There have always been ravens at the Tower. Charles II's astronomer-royal pleaded with the king to get rid of them, and the king agreed, until told the legend that if the ravens left the Tower, the crown and England would fall. The Tower now has a full complement of eight birds, including one, Ronald, who was born in the Tower in 1989. The crown and England seem secure.

mentality

oliday on one of Britain's coast

by III in the 13th century). Iona's classical mansion, lighthouse or the island's room are just a few of the treasures available. Three and a half miles wide, Iona offers excellent birding and rock climbing. There are occasional invasions of seals and a sighting of a murrelet (cousin to the penguin) has been known to them in by the boatload. Tavern provides the island's night life. To get there, take a boat from Mull or Ilfracombe. (Details from The Landmark Shetland, Maidenhead, 0628 825925.) Iona, off St David's head in Pembrokeshire coast, is privately owned and atmospheric island, one and a half

miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide, is inhabited only from April to October. St Trefan brought Christianity here in AD 186.

There is a herd of red deer, wild sheep, and a large colony of seals on the island's west coast. You can stay at the Farmhouse full board, or at the self-catering bungalow. The island generates its own electricity and a spring provides the water. A string of rocks off the island, known as the Bitches, attracts white water canoeists in the summer. (Details and bookings from the warden, 0437 781234.)

● Iona, Hebrides: Regarded as a spiritual oasis, it is home to the Iona Community which holds retreats and conferences. Before the arrival of St Columba in 563, the island had been adopted by sun-worshipping druids. Visitors still remark on the clarity of light over Iona and the way it is often bathed in

sunshine when cloud hangs over the mainland and the neighbouring island of Mull.

The 13th-century abbey, the remains of a nunnery and numerous Celtic high crosses in carved stone are reminders of its early importance as a religious centre. Its serenity is slightly lessened in summer by day visitors. (Details from Oban, Mull and District Tourist Board, 0631 63122.)

● Barra: The smallest and southernmost of the outer Hebrides can be reached by plane, which lands on the beach at low tide. Sir Compton Mackenzie (author of Whisky Galore) is buried at the 12th-century church of St Barr. Little happens in Barra, apart from a Gaelic festival in July. You can walk the 14 miles or so round the island, arrange fishing trips and dinghy hire (weather permitting) through your hotel, or clamor to the highest point, Heaval, with its statue of the Madonna and Child. (Details from Western Isles Tourist Board, 0851 703083.)

CLARE COLVIN



There are no problems with rights of way and footpath maps in London. From the Tower one can head off in various directions, though do please use the underpass to and from Tower Hill underground station if trying to cross Tower Hill: it not only avoids the fierce traffic, but takes you past the best surviving section of the Roman city wall.

Possible options are to go northwest through the narrow lanes of the City in search of lively halls. When churches and taverns, northeast to Whitechapel on the trail of Jack the Ripper, or east to Docklands.

The route I have chosen strikes south to Southwark, over Tower Bridge. The two main towers and high-level walkways are open to the public, displaying the original steam engines which raised and lowered the bascules until 1976, and offering superb panoramic views of the Tower and the river. Go to the south side of the bridge and take the first turn right into Tooley Street, following signs to HMS Belfast, the battle-cruiser which helped to sink the Scharnhorst and is now a floating museum. Pickle Herring Lane is the approximate site of Quilp's wharf featured in *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

Return to Tooley Street by Battle Bridge Lane, the area of warehousing which used to be known as "London's larder". The railway arches and warehouses along the south side of Tooley Street accommodate wine bars, the London Dungeon waxwork display, and large wine stores. Hay's Galleria is a conversion of Hay's Wharf warehousing which pioneered refrigeration for food storage.

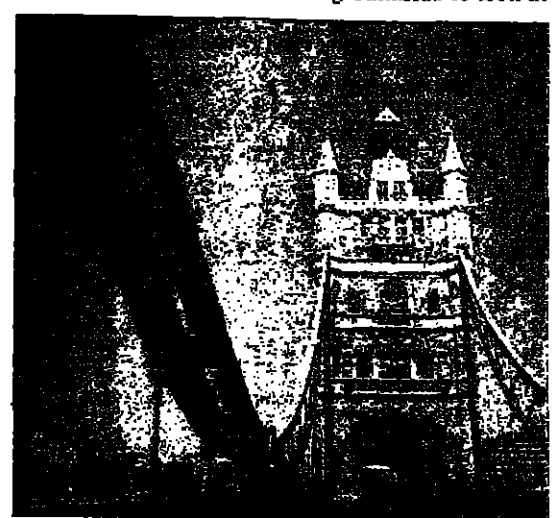
After the London Dungeon turn left through John Street, a tunnel beneath the railway, to Guy's Hospital, where the courtyard and chapel are usually open to visitors, and there is a popular patisserie called A Piece of Cake. On the other side of St Thomas Street is the Victorian St Thomas's Hospital operating theatre, preserved as a museum, with an operating table like a butcher's slab, surgical instruments like workmen's tools, a box of sawdust to catch the blood, standing room for students, and a leather strap for patients (female) to bite on in the absence of anaesthetics.

Turn left down Borough High Street, and at the third turn on the left stop at the George Inn with its yard, the only surviving galleries coaching inn in London and where Maggy suggested young Tip should write his begging letter in *Little Dorrit*. The low bar, with beams, inglenook fireplace and Parliament Clock, is very atmospheric, though often crowded. Cross Borough High Street by the war memorial and go through the gate to the yard adjoining No

50, a timber-framed building which was once the Goat Inn.

Return north along Borough High Street, under the railway bridge, turn left and descend the flight of steps to the right to Southwark Cathedral. After visiting, turn right from the south porch, go up the steps and right into Cathedral Street, and take the first left to St Mary Overie Dock to see the topsail schooner Kathleen & May.

Along Pickford's Wharf, past what was the London residence of the bishops of Winchester, is Clink Street, site of Clink Prison. Bankside, the Anchor pub and, after passing under Southwark Bridge, the Shakespeare Globe Museum in Bear Gardens. Walk along Bankside to look at



Up and under: the route skirts Tower Bridge

Nos 49 (Cardinal's Wharf) and 51-2.

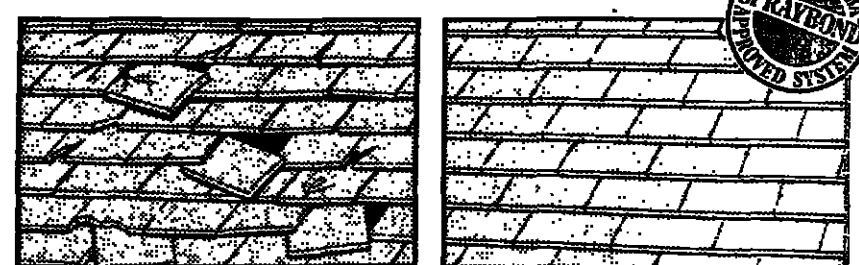
Return along Bankside to Southwark Bridge, past Vintners' Hall and across Upper Thames Street through Doby Court to Skinners Lane and Garlick Hill for the church of St James Garlickhythe. "Wren's lantern". Turn right on leaving into Skinners Lane, across Queens Street and into College Street for "Dick Whittington's church". St Michael Paternoster Royal. Turn left on leaving, past Little College Lane to Innholders Hall, and left up Dowgate Hill past the halls of the Dyers (No 10), Skinners (No 8½) and Tallow Chandlers (No 4). Admission to lively company halls is free but you must make an appointment.

The walk can be terminated at Cannon Street station, or you can complete the circuit by returning to the Tower via Cannon Street, diverting left down Martin Lane for the Old Wine Shades, the City's oldest wine bar, and right into Artur Street to the Monument, up Pudding Lane, and right into Easiecheap leading to Great Tower Street, Tower Hill and the Tower.

● The total distance is about four miles, but a full tour of all the places of interest passed would easily fill a day. A London A-Z or Nicholson London Streetfinder are the best maps to follow.

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A wealth of Dutch treats

Francesca
Greenoak reports
 on the 1992 Dutch
 Floriade, in which
 30 countries set
 new standards in
 growing and
 showing, and
 environmental care

The Dutch take horticulture seriously: 90 per cent of the world trade in bulbs, 70 per cent of cut flowers and more than 50 per cent of the pot plant business stem from their small country. Accordingly, you would expect The Netherlands' once-a-decade Floriade garden show to be something special. It is.

The 1992 Floriade lacks the vulgarity of some British garden festivals, focusing instead on the horticultural brilliance of 30 countries. Tucked into a 170-acre triangle of land in Zoetermeer, near The Hague, the exhibition sets new standards.

The huge principal opening display of Dutch bulbs in the main exhibition hall achieves perfection in every plant. The tulips are outstandingly grown, with straight stems and good clear colours, juxtaposed in crisp groupings. The huge trumpets of hippeastrums (colloquially, amaryllis) are overwhelming en masse, especially as no plant has fewer than four flowers and there are several new full-skirted double kinds.

Tulips (about 375 different varieties) are also part of outdoor displays, combining imaginatively with hyacinths. Lilies, hyacinths and wood anemones feature in containers and terrace plantings. Inside and out, the sweet, heavy scent of hyacinths of 40 or more kinds combines with the foxy muskiness of crown imperials (*Fritillaria imperialis*) just opening their amber and flame flowers.

It is early days for the outdoor displays, but they are off to a good start. At the British garden (principally sponsored by Marks & Spencer), John Ravenscroft of Bridgmore nurseries explained the policy of showing plants not well known to the Dutch in a quartered design of summer flowers, roses, pools and a kitchen garden. Holder of the



National Collection of pulmonarias, he chose the clear, deep blue *Pulmonaria angustifolia aurea* with its narrow, unspotted leaves, as partner to groups of rich blue hyacinths. Among the new plants, the shapely, purple-tinged leaves of the primula *Dusky Lady* make a good show well before the wine-coloured flowers appear.

Russian peonies, with names such as Chevonj and Khokoma (not yet to be found in the European plant directories), promise future excitement as they begin to unfold. In the Japanese garden, conifers and evergreens such as yew, *Chamaecyparis obtusa* and the holly *Ilex ornata* are groomed in an elegant topiary.

Artefacts as well as plants provide interesting ideas. A beautiful Japanese trellis partition is constructed from sturdy, thick bamboo canes, bound together in a glossy green lattice with strong black twine. Romantic semi-ruins are suggested by a Dutch team which uses large irregular chunks of brick walling set out at different angles with wild flowers growing over it. Water plays a strong role throughout the show, linking and dividing exhibits with dykes, polders, lakes, streams, waterfalls and fountains, one of which spouts two silvery curves like leaping dolphins.

The environmental sections are also impressive, ranging from high-technology within an ecological framework to water use, with entertaining displays aimed at adults as much as children and demonstrating the importance of having an environmentally aware horticultural policy which runs through government and growers and extends into education.

● The Floriade runs until October at Zoetermeer. Entry 20 florins (about £6.50), child 12.5fl (about £4). Details from travel agents or The Netherlands Tourist Board (071-828 7913).



Trumpeting spring: massed tulips in the Keukenhof Gardens and (inset) a display from Floriade

BEST BUY

THERE has been a revival of enthusiasm for old-fashioned, fragrant summer-flowering pinks such as the white Mrs Sinkins, White Ladies and the crimson-laced Gran's Favourite. Recent hybrids tend to be longer-flowering but less fragrant, though Doris and Denis are worth considering. Pike's Pink is also sweet smelling. The new Devon Dawn and Devon Delight have a slight fragrance: pink Devon Glow is stronger. Larger plants from nurseries can be split into two before planting to give double the value.



Fragrant: *Dianthus alwoodii*

WEEKEND TIPS

- Re-sow bare patches of lawn, having pricked them over with a fork and raked and firmed.
- Complete dividing and replanting snowdrops and winter aconites.
- Protect young potato shoots from cold nights with spun fleece or newspaper.
- Take out old stumps of brussels sprouts, broccoli and cabbages, and prepare ground for new crop.
- Keep houseplants watered and fed.

MY PERFECT WEEKEND

We ask people in the public eye to reveal the private fantasies that would turn a weekend into 48 hours of pure magic

MARINA WARNER

Writer and historian

Where would you go?
The British Museum.

How would you get there?
By the underground to Tottenham Court Road.

Where would you stay?
In a secret cupboard near the frieze of the *Amazons from Bassae*, if there is one.

Who would be your perfect companion?
The Prince of Wales.

What essential piece of clothing would you take?
Two sleeping bags.

What would you have to eat?
Pan bagna — French bread soaked in the first pressing of southern Italian olive oil, with anchovies, olives, tomatoes and boiled eggs.

What would you have to drink?
A fine sancerre.

What would you take to read?
Social Trends 22, 1992 edition.

What music would you listen to?
Strauss's *Four Last Songs*.

What would you watch on television?
A documentary about the traditional role of the monarch as patron of arts and learning: a profile of Lorenzo il Magnifico, for example.

What film would you watch?
Boys 'n' the Hood.

Would you play any games?
Charades.

What luxury would you take?
Ripe mangoes.

What piece of art would you like to have there?
Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* (they are there already).

Who would be your least welcome guest?
A policeman.

What three things would you leave behind?
My temper, anxiety, and my various shortcomings as a persuader.

What three things would you most like to do?
Persuade the prince that the King's library should not be emptied of its collections of



books, manuscripts and letters. Persuade him that the Reading Room should be saved, with its bookcases, and the books in them, and that Reading should still go on in the Room; that it shouldn't be turned into a concourse with tropical plants, and that, for instance, the museum could use it as its own reference library. Persuade the prince that charges in either museums or libraries violate his subjects' equality of access to knowledge.

What medicines would you take?
A feather with which to tickle him until he capitulated.

To whom would you send a postcard?
David Mellor, national heritage secretary.

What souvenir would you bring home?
A signed undertaking from the prince to think about all the things I want.

What would you like to find when you got home?
That the libraries had been given the advertising budget of the armed services towards keeping them open every day and helping them buy books. (This is just for a start: I'd be happy with some of the royal lolly earmarked for this cause, too.)

Interview by
Rosanna Greenstreet

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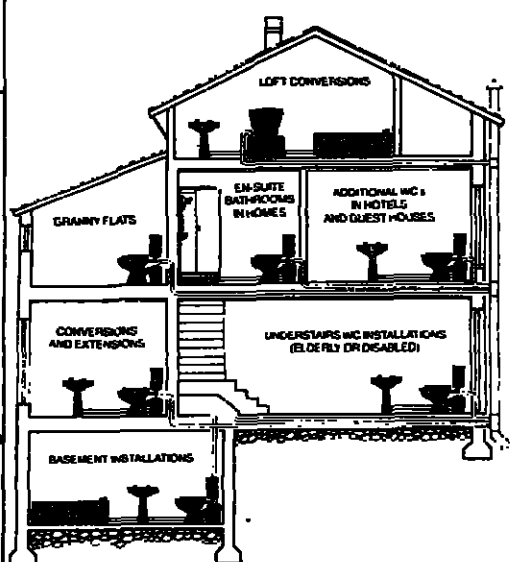
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 10 ROSAS £10
 10 TULIPS £10
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 10 CROCUSES £10
 10 DAFNODILS £10
 10 JONQUILS £10
 10 NARCISSES £10
 10 SCILLA'S £10
 10 SNOWDROPS £10
 10 WINTER ACONITES £10
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 10 CROCUSES £10
 10 DAFNODILS £10



Faith in their work: St Paul's church, in Didsbury, Manchester, is now the Open College headquarters, combining modern interiors with ecclesiastical tradition

Preach in the converted

Lynne Greenwood finds that redundant churches are being successfully born again as homes or unusual office space

Every day staff at the Open College headquarters use a computerised key-card to open the 115-year-old arched pine doors of St Paul's Methodist church. In contrast, the porch where they hang their coats is lit by the original metal-framed lantern, which has shone down on worshippers for more than a century. Inside St Paul's, at Didsbury, Manchester, the combination of ancient and modern, of ecclesiastical tradition and 1990s interior design, is impressive.

Ten years after the church celebrated its centenary, in 1977, dwindling congregations and rising heating bills persuaded the Church of England Commissioners to sell the building to a developer. After a conversion costing more than £600,000, the stone church is now home to three floors of office space for up to 50 Open College staff. The college, which provides vocational training, chose the church as its new headquarters, combining former offices in London and Manchester.

Philip Wilthrew, the financial director, whose first-floor office includes a stone arch and carved stonework, says: "We had been housed in rather faceless office blocks. This place stood out because it is unique."

Between 1900 and 1989 the Catholic church in England closed only 52 churches. The Church of

England, however, made 1,292 churches redundant between 1969 and 1990. Alternative uses were found for 55 per cent of them, 24 per cent were demolished, and 21 per cent preserved by the Redundant Churches Fund, financed in partnership with the Department of the Environment to maintain churches of architectural or historic interest where services are no longer held.

Of those which found a new use, most were given over to civic, cultural and community use, including a county record office, medical library, and an exhibition and tourist centre. Others were converted into homes.

Over the same period, £16.6 million was raised from the sale of redundant churches and sites, of which £2.5 million was given to the Redundant Churches Fund.

In 1990, the last year for which figures are available, the future of 33 redundant churches was settled, with 68 still to be decided. But it is a growing problem for churches of many denominations, particularly in inner cities where the population dwindles, and churches are left in need of urgent, expensive repairs.

In January, the Church of England's Liverpool diocese announced it was to close seven churches as part of a restructuring of its inner-city parishes, the most drastic closures in recent church history. In the Norwich diocese St Martin-at-Palace has been successfully converted into a probation day centre, and the village church of St Michael at Coslany is leased to Norwich Historic Churches Trust and used as a sports centre.

Strict regulations control the future use of all churches, many of which are listed buildings and subject to tough planning regulations. The exterior of St Paul's, a Grade II listed building, remains as it was when the building was first opened.

Inside, the nave pillars of polished Aberdeen red granite now stand solidly alongside pastel-coloured walls and screens which divide computer-filled offices. Bath stone nave arches capped with intricate carvings provide original decoration.

Chris Maybin, the architect who spent almost a year on the project, says the height of the carved stone caps, decorated with pheasants, hares, foxes and owls, determined the different floor levels. His first big structural problem was ridding the pine roof timbers of

dry rot and expelling the nesting pigeons from the roof space and spire. On the top floor, he created two conference rooms, each with a beautiful window.

There were no stained glass windows in the former United Reform Church at Warley, near Halifax, West Yorkshire, when the potter David Holmes paid £3,500 for the empty building in 1979. After spending thousands of pounds and years of work restoring the stone exterior of the mock-Gothic church, and converting its interior, he is now offering one of

two four-bedroomed units for sale at £85,000.

Built in 1705, with later additions, the village church is surrounded by overgrown grave stones and monuments, the earliest of which dates from 1753. "It was a condition of the sale that they were not disturbed," Mr Holmes says.

In Highfield, Sheffield, the Victorian Anglican church of St Barnabas was bought by the Yorkshire Metropolitan Housing Association for a £1.5 million conversion to four floors of sheltered accommodation. Phil Smith, the senior development manager, says it was a particularly good site for sheltered accommodation "because the church is in the heart of the community, with all the services old people need."

Sunshine at half the price



Buyers' France

EAST PYRENEES

The further south and east you go in the Pyrenees, the stronger the influence of the Mediterranean. The climate in the Pyrenees Orientales, extending from Perpignan to the Spanish border, is the driest and the sunniest in France. However, property prices are half those in other, more fashionable, parts of the south.

Half an hour inland from the Mediterranean coast at St Cyprien, near the old town of Thuir, you can buy this pretty terrace house (right) for £27,000, situated in a peaceful village surrounded by vineyards. It is 30 minutes' drive from the airport at Perpignan, and an hour from the ski slopes at Font Romeu.

The old stone house has been partly restored and is habitable, but needs modernisation. It has a kitchen and living room on the ground floor, two bedrooms and a shower-room upstairs, and an attic. The UK agent is La Collection Francaise, 66 High Street, Manton, Marlborough, Wiltshire (0672 516266).

The southeast Pyrenean region, with its craggy landscape split by spectacular gorges and scattered with Cathar castles and Romanesque churches, provides excellent summer walking. Winter skiing is good, too, with several sunny ski resorts, including Font Romeu and Les Angles, an hour from Perpignan.

The coast is less inspiring. The area around Perpignan is the poor man's Riviera, with a Mediterranean coastline and a rash of new resorts aimed at low-budget French tourists. However, property is cheaper than on the Côte d'Azur. Prices start at £15,000 for a small seaside studio, and from £32,000 for a two-bedroom holiday villa.

Further south, close to the Spanish frontier, the scenery improves, with picturesque fish-

ing villages such as Collioure and Port Vendres. A modern two-bedroom villa here costs about £55,000. Agent: Propriétés Roussillon, Benjamin House, 10 Portland Street, Birmingham (021-327 3654).

The best property buys are to be found in the rugged hinterland, with its crop of pretty hilltop villages and old houses for less than £30,000.

A dilapidated two-bedroom cottage, accessible only by a narrow, stony road, costs about £15,000. A three-bedroom house with breathtaking views but without a modern kitchen or bathroom will cost from £35,000.

Village houses, clustered around a square, a church and a boules pitch, start at £20,000 for anything that is habitable. A renovated house with two bedrooms and a roof terrace, but without a garden, would cost



Terrace house for £27,000

from £30,000. There are also a number of large farmhouses, often with land, from £40,000 unrenovated and from £70,000 to £200,000 for the modernised version. A good-sized farmhouse, partly renovated and with outbuildings, near the Spanish border, is for sale at £75,000 through La Collection Francaise. It has beautiful, far-reaching views.

The region is easily accessible by plane, with international airports at Perpignan, Montpellier and Toulouse. Allow at least 12 hours to drive from Calais.

CHERYL TAYLOR

Home from home: Dwina Murphy-Gibb in Oxfordshire

Spirits having flown in

When Dwina Murphy-Gibb, the wife of singer Robin Gibb, flies in from America — where she has a Florida mansion — and walks through the stone porch of her medieval Oxfordshire home (a former prebendary), she is a different woman.

"I can completely relax and wear long flowing gowns instead of beach gear. It's wonderfully cool here — I actually hate the sun in Florida and spend a lot of my time inside. Given the choice, both Robin and I would rather live in our Oxfordshire home permanently — it makes me feel part of history."

Work prevents Mr Gibb, the 42-year-old Bee Gee, from spending more than about three months of the year in his ancient home, once a training ground for priests, and reputedly visited by Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII. His 39-year-old wife prolongs her trips by spending about "two months here and two months there", although the couple are always in England for Christmas.

Their nine-year-old son Robin-John fits his schooling around his parents' itinerant lifestyle. "He has one school just outside Thame and another in Florida," Mrs Murphy-Gibb explains. "He doesn't find it difficult to catch up with friends again — he particularly loves the American school summer camp — but the different maths can be a bit confusing."

Robin-John is clearly aware of his dual existence. Each thick wooden door in his Oxfordshire home bears elaborate childish drawings stuck on with Blu-tac announcing that one is entering the State of Mississippi (downstairs) or the State of Vermont (upstairs).

The Gibbs' two homes could not



Living in the past: Dwina Murphy-Gibb prefers her medieval prebendary to the Florida home

be more different. The imposing white and green Florida house is built in an American mock-Georgian style and sits grandly on the Biscayne Bay. The Oxfordshire Prebendary is equally grand (I initially mistook the gatehouse for the real thing) but is firmly medieval with 14th century Cotswold stone walls, its own chapel, a ruined wall with traces of soot from an ancient fire, and the great hall where log fires burn fiercely in winter.

The furniture is in keeping with both the period and Mrs Murphy-Gibb's fascination with the past (her book *Cormac: the Seers*, about a 3rd century Celtic monarch, was published this year by Pan, price £7.99). Hence the suit of armour which arrived as a surprise present for Robin-John from an American friend ("it took six months to get through Customs"), brass rubbings, gothic trestles, a huge refectory table round which the Bee Gees often dine, and four-poster beds. In vivid juxtaposition are such high-tech items as a 4ft-square television in the Great Hall; a punch ball among Mrs Murphy-Gibb's collection of spinning wheels; and a video recorder at the foot of the matrimonial bed for playing back Robin-John's home movies (he has a cinecamera).

The Prebendary, sited opposite the village church, also has resident ghosts. When the Gibbs finally took up residence in 1986 (a year after purchasing it), they were initially startled by the massive iron door bolts which would slide across of their own volition. "It was as though someone was asking us not to leave the house empty again," Mrs Murphy-Gibb says. "After a few months, the bolts stopped — even when we're not here, my cousin lives here, so the house doesn't feel alone."

Other "presences" include the sound of someone winding clocks in the Great Hall and a stone basin for set in the sill of Mr Gibb's study

which, occasionally fills up of its own accord. Far from disturbing the occupants, these ghosts fit in with Mrs Murphy-Gibb's passion for the past. Indeed it was the house's history — coupled with the swirling mists which appeared on their first visit — which compelled the couple to buy it after spotting the ad in *Country Life*.

The owner was initially reluctant to sell to a London pop star in case he painted the walls purple and held wild parties, but finally relented. Since then, the Gibbs have painstakingly continued to restore and maintain original features.

In between school runs and transatlantic flights Mrs Murphy-Gibb also writes poetry, paints in the adjoining refectory, and occasionally cooks if the full-time macrobiotic chef is in their American home (all vegetables come from the organic garden).

And when they are in Oxfordshire, Mrs Murphy-Gibb says the family joins in the community as much as possible: "Robin is honorary chairman of the cricket club, and I'm a member of the Thames Historical Society."

Partying is equally important, although not on the wild scale that the former owner envisaged. The upper floor of the beamed refectory makes an ideal venue for Mr Gibb to sing, his wife to play the harp and their son to tinker on the trumpet.

JANE BIDDER

Bowling into country life

The sound of leather on willow is the perfect companion to a summer day in the country, and even more delightful when the cricket pitch is at the bottom of your garden. Buy the Manor Farm, at North Perrott in South Somerset, and this cricketer's dream is yours — for £400,000.

The 18th-century, Grade II farmhouse is a long, low, honey-coloured building of local stone with mulioned windows. The front garden is on the main road going through the village, but the road is quiet. Most traffic bypasses the village on the A30 from Yeovil to Crewkerne.

The grounds are to the back. It comes with 24 acres of gardens, paddocks and parkland, as well as the cricket ground. You do have to be a cricket lover, though. A condition of the sale is that the purchaser allows the ground to continue to be used by the North Perrott Cricket Club. The pitch extends to about five acres. It comes with a pavilion and

HOUSE HUNTER
Manor Farm
Somerset



Anyone for cricket? The Manor Farm has its own pitch

The 27ft dining-room and the kitchen have fireplaces.

Although the house is fully modernised, the interior does need freshening up with some redecorating. In front of the house is a walled garden, with an inner garden immediately next to the house with lawns and paved paths. The main garden is to the south and west of the house, with lawns, rose beds, paved paths, yew and beech hedges and walls which in summer are covered in honeysuckle. A hard tennis court, herb garden and greenhouse border a three-acre paddock.

Village life flourishes in North Perrott, with a parish church, the Manor Arms public house, post office, village hall and garden centre, and the private Perrott Hill Prep School. The Seavention and Catstock hunts are held nearby. Taunton is about 22 miles.

RACHEL KELLY
● Black Horse agencies (0460 72403).

Golf swing could cure old abbey's handicap

Heap of the week: Vale Royal Abbey

Vale Royal Abbey needs a change of luck. More than 50 planning applications have been lodged on the part-medieval property in two decades but a solution seems as far away as ever. Yet this is a prosperous Cheshire countryside, just outside Northwich and within easy commuting distance of Manchester.

Vale Royal district council planning committee last year agreed an application for an enabling development of 48 houses, but strong local opposition persuaded the full council to overturn the decision.

The applicant, BHC of Bradford, rather than modifying its plans, now says 63 houses are needed to generate sufficient funds for the

repair of the abbey. It proposes a golf course, with the restored abbey as a clubhouse, and houses on land in front of the abbey. Basic repairs, says its architect, Andrew Brown of MacCormack Associates, will cost £1.3 million.

"When I first saw the house two years ago it was in an abominable condition, wetter inside than out. The parapet gutters had failed and the structure was saturated," he says. Since then the roof has been secured, interior fittings put into store and the house has dried out.

In 1977, the abbey was acquired by the Michaelmas Trust for use as a centre for mentally handicapped young adults. But the trust over-stretched itself and work came to a



Sorry sight: once proud Vale Royal Abbey, founded by Edward I

halt halfway through a disastrous programme of roof repairs, done by the Manpower Services Commission using unskilled labour.

The abbey is built on an Elizabethan plan, extended at the back by a vast Victorian wing. Founded by Edward I in 1277, it was the

largest Cistercian settlement in England. After the Dissolution it was acquired in 1616 by the Cholmondeley family, who lived there until this century.

The main front is unusually low-slung, with no more than a piano nobile above a shallow ground floor and a roof not steep enough for dormers. Giant 17th century pilasters line the facade.

To be fair, the present owner has seriously sought to arrest decay, but when the application goes to appeal in June it is vital that if permission is granted, provisions ensure that development is started only as agreed phases of repairs are completed.

MARCUS BINNEY

● Further information from Martin Boyatt at Vale Royal council.

